

Purchasing Practices HRDD Framework for the Garment and Footwear Industry



VERSION 2 – SEPTEMBER 2025

**A resource for evaluating the integration
of Responsible Purchasing Practices
in Human Rights Due Diligence.**



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The *Purchasing Practices HRDD Framework* is intended to complement the **Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices (CFRPP)** which was developed in 2022 by the **Ethical Trading Initiative, Fair Wear, Ethical Trade Norway** and the **German Partnership for Sustainable Textiles (PST)**. The CFRPP is based on extensive benchmarking of existing resources on Responsible Purchasing Practices (RPP) and public consultation, and builds upon the recommendations outlined in the Sustainable Terms of Trade Initiative (STTI) **White Paper on the definition and application of commercial compliance** (September 2021).

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Introduction

Purchasing practices encompass the full spectrum of commercial interactions between purchasing companies (e.g. brands and retailers) and their suppliers. It is increasingly understood that the way these practices are conducted can have profound implications for working conditions throughout global supply chains.¹

Research has consistently shown that practices such as pricing below the cost of responsible production, short-term planning, last-minute changes to orders, and late payments can directly impact suppliers' ability to provide decent working conditions and fair wages.² Conversely, more Responsible Purchasing Practices (RPPs) create the preconditions for:

- More equitable buyer-supplier relationships built on mutual respect and shared accountability.
- Reduced supply chain risks and enhanced business resilience.
- Better working conditions, including living wages.
- Sustainable improvements in labour standards.

The **OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment & Footwear Sector** and forthcoming Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) legislation explicitly recognise the importance of integrating purchasing practices into effective HRDD. To ensure effective regulation of HRDD legislation - in a smart mix with existing voluntary accountability mechanisms - there is need for a shared understanding of how HRDD principles apply to purchasing practices, clarity on the related activities for which companies should be held accountable, and alignment on how

to assess company performance.

The *Purchasing Practices HRDD Framework* ("PP-DD Framework") addresses this need by:

- **Setting out clear steps that companies should take to make their purchasing practices more responsible using an HRDD approach.**
- **Detailing what is required of purchasing companies at each step to ensure this approach is meaningful.**

Technical guidance for the *PP-DD Framework* and companion resources intend to:

- Provide further explanation of key terms used in the *PP-DD Framework*.
 - Set-out key indicators and potential sources of evidence to demonstrate compliance with the framework's "Requirements". This will enable consistent benchmarking, meaningful comparison, and greater accountability across the industry.
 - Provide further guidance for companies on how to practically meet the Requirements.
 - Establish "progress markers" to track incremental improvements as companies work toward meeting the Requirements in full.
-

What is the *Purchasing Practices HRDD Framework*?

The *PP-DD Framework* is a recommendation to key actors seeking to hold purchasing companies accountable for responsible business conduct, such as policy makers, regulators, multi-stakeholder initiatives, and investors. It sets out core requirements of companies to ensure their purchasing practices are informed by international HRDD standards: the *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (UNGPs) and the *OECD Guidelines for MNEs on Responsible Business Conduct* (OECD Guidelines).

The *PP-DD Framework* does not serve as a standalone accountability mechanism or tool, or as a surplus 'auditing' exercise. Rather, it provides the fundamental elements to be transposed or otherwise incorporated into:

- The development of HRDD legislation and related compliance processes.
- Investor assessments.
- The criteria of existing accountability mechanisms and tools managed by multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) and other third parties.

Organisations using this framework should treat it as a gap analysis tool - comparing their existing assessment mechanisms and criteria against the Requirements to ensure completeness.

By establishing clear, specific and ambitious Steps and Requirements, the *PP-DD Framework* **aims to contribute to greater transparency, comparability, and accountability across the industry.**





Collaborating to raise industry standards

Whilst we acknowledge that responsible companies and leading industry initiatives have made strides towards improved purchasing practices, wider industry norms continue to fall short of enabling decent working conditions. As such, this *PP-DD Framework* sets deliberately ambitious standards, seeking to address known risks and support continuous improvement, rather than to validate problematic industry norms.

The *PP-DD Framework* is the result of an iterative collaboration process among stakeholders from across the industry, using a threefold methodology to ensure its relevance, applicability and credibility:

- Building upon existing research on Responsible Purchasing Practices, as detailed in the bibliography (see page 30).
- Leveraging the technical expertise and practical knowledge held by the authoring organisations, who have extensive long-term experience engaging with suppliers, purchasing companies, worker representatives and other industry initiatives to improve purchasing practices and advance human rights in global supply chains.
- Reflecting the insights gained through multiple rounds of engagement with diverse stakeholders across the supply chain—including suppliers, purchasing companies, workers, trade unions, and civil society organisations—who shared their lived experiences of working within global garment and footwear supply chains. These stakeholders provided invaluable insights during the initial development phase and conducted detailed reviews of Version 1, contributing substantively to the refinements reflected in Version 2.

This collaborative approach ensures that the *PP-DD Framework* represents not just theoretical best practice, but practical, implementable standards that address the predominant challenges affecting workers arising from prevailing purchasing practices.

Background

The HRDD cycle

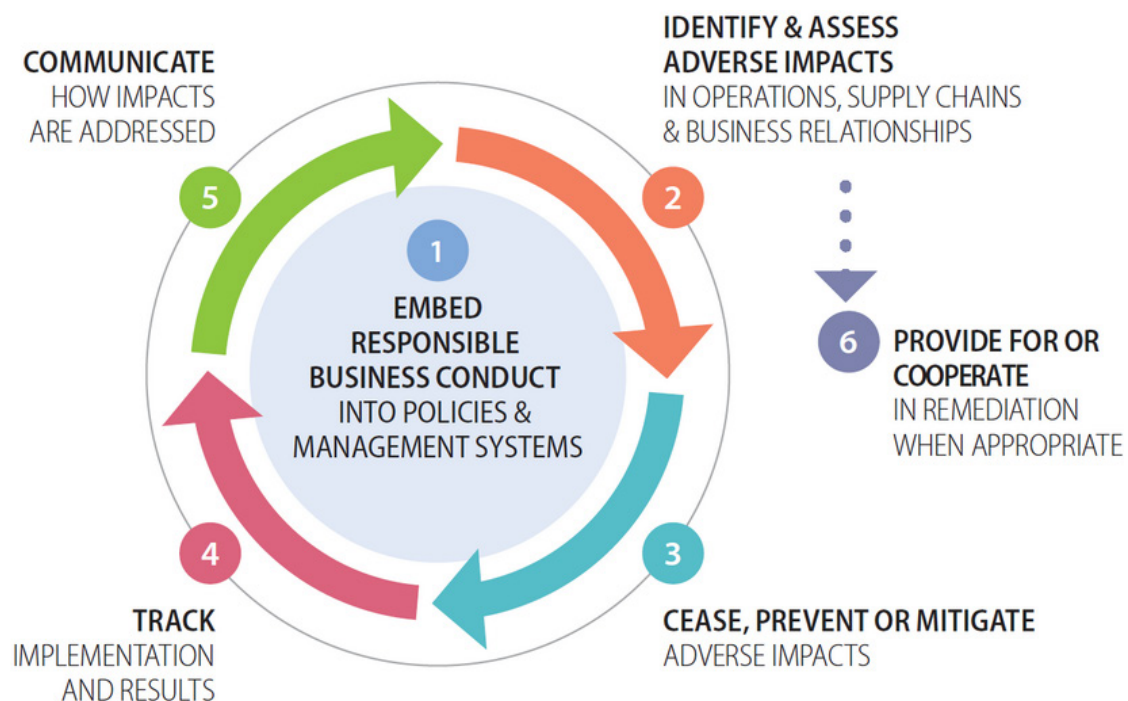
Established in the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (UNGPs), HRDD is an ongoing risk-based management system through which businesses are obliged to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address any actual or potential adverse human rights impacts in their operations and supply chains.

OECD guidance outlines a 6-step cycle for the continuous conduct of HRDD (see Figure 1, below), additionally mandating meaningful stakeholder engagement to inform each step of the cycle. The

results from each step directly inform the following step(s), enabling relevant risks to be identified, prioritised and addressed.

A comprehensive HRDD approach requires companies to assess and address the full spectrum of human and labour rights risks in their operations and supply chains - from workplace safety and freedom of association to discrimination and forced labour. Within this broader context, purchasing practices represent one critical area where companies must systematically evaluate and improve their impact on human rights.

Figure 1. OECD 6-step Human Rights Due Diligence cycle



Applying an HRDD approach to purchasing practices

RPPs are not one-size-fits-all. Supply chain structure, business model, operational context, and the size of a purchasing company relative to its supplier all influence the potential for the purchasing company's practices to impact the supplier and supply-chain workers. As such, the *PP-DD Framework* presents how purchasing practices can be integrated into an HRDD approach, informed by the UNGPs, OECD guidance and emerging HRDD legislation.

This model places responsibility on the purchasing company to sufficiently interrogate how its practices may be creating or contributing to risks for workers in the supply chain; and to take action to cease, prevent and mitigate harmful impacts. In the context of purchasing practices, acknowledging this responsibility of the purchasing company is crucial for counteracting unequal power dynamics that can otherwise pressure suppliers into accepting terms that limit their ability or incentive to meet good labour standards.³

Emerging HRDD legislation reflects this understanding. The EU's Corporate

Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (EU CSDDD) explicitly requires companies to examine their purchasing practices during risk assessment and to modify them, where needed, to prevent harm. By including these requirements, legislators affirm the obligation on purchasing companies to demonstrate through HRDD that their purchasing practices enable, rather than impede, respect for human rights in supply chains.

"Purchasing practices represent one critical area where companies must systematically evaluate and improve their impact on human rights."

Purchasing practices within the broader HREDD context

The *PP-DD Framework* focuses specifically on purchasing practices and their impact on the human rights of supply chain workers. It does not cover all corporate responsibilities under Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD). The framework assumes that the purchasing company is already conducting HRDD and has mechanisms in place to engage stakeholders, participate in collective action where appropriate, identify and address human rights risks, and remediate harm.

The framework also does not address environmental due diligence. However, it acknowledges that environmental expectations can affect human rights. For example, requiring suppliers to meet environmental standards may increase costs. If these costs are not reflected in responsible pricing, they could lead to downward pressure on workers' wages. For this reason, environmental standards are referenced where they intersect with potential human rights impacts.

Building on the Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices (CFRPP)

The CFRPP provides shared language on Responsible Purchasing Practices through five core principles (see *Figure 2*, below) that support purchasing companies **to engage with stakeholders and take practical action to create an enabling environment for good labour standards** in their supply chains. Companies are encouraged to use the CFRPP as part of an HRDD approach and adapt the practices to suit their buyer-supplier operational context. As such it is intended to guide companies towards good practice, rather than to be 'complied with'.

The *PP-DD Framework* builds on this intended use of the CFRPP, by setting out the detail of what is required of companies to address their purchasing practices in line with an HRDD approach. While it draws on the 5 Principles of the CFRPP and integrates many of its practices, **the PP-DD Framework focuses on the actions for which companies should be held accountable**. It is intended to be applicable across the scope of business models and sizes in the garment and footwear industry.

Figure 2. Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices - Summary of 5 Principles



Ensuring meaningful stakeholder engagement on purchasing practices

The relationship between buyer and supplier lies at the heart of RPPs. The OECD guidance on HRDD establishes an expectation of "shared responsibility" between these business partners, while the CFRPP (*Principle 2*) emphasises building equitable partnerships rooted in open dialogue. Both parties play a role in identifying, preventing, mitigating, and remediating adverse impacts through collaborative planning, allocation of resources, and consistent communication. However, the power imbalances inherent in buyer-supplier relationships can inhibit honest communication about purchasing practices and their adverse impacts.

To foster meaningful engagement, the purchasing company is expected to incentivise transparency, ensure suppliers and other stakeholders are protected from retaliation, and create safe spaces for raising concerns. The purchasing company should ensure its stakeholder engagement:

- Addresses power imbalances through appropriate safeguards and facilitation
- Protects stakeholders from commercial retaliation, e.g. by establishing policies stating feedback will not negatively affect commercial relationships, using third-party facilitators for sensitive discussions where appropriate, and actively monitoring for indicators of retaliation.
- Provides reasonable assistance

when needed - sharing HRDD guidance, resources, or technical support - to enhance suppliers' capacity to participate equitably in negotiations and discussions.

- Provides multiple channels for feedback, including anonymous options.
- Minimises consultation fatigue and resource burden on participants (by e.g. working through collective industry bodies).
- Ensures accessibility for all relevant stakeholder groups.
- Maintains ongoing two-way dialogue rather than one-off consultations.
- Leads to concrete actions and measurable improvements.

Success is measured by whether engagement leads to concrete improvements in purchasing practices and working conditions.

When intermediaries, agents, or other third parties are involved in the sourcing relationship, all parties share responsibility for conducting HRDD and engaging meaningfully with stakeholders. Responsible practices must be cascaded throughout the supply chain, and the complexity of the sourcing structure must not be used to evade accountability for respecting workers' human rights.

Success is measured by whether engagement leads to concrete improvements in purchasing practices and working conditions.



Key stakeholders for HRDD

Meaningful stakeholder engagement should inform every stage of the HRDD cycle. While **suppliers are the primary stakeholders** regarding purchasing practices, effective HRDD requires engaging other stakeholders at relevant stages, for example:

- **Workers** and their representatives can provide crucial insights on how purchasing practices affect labour conditions.
- **Trade unions** can offer further expertise on wages, working hours and collective bargaining implications.
- **Civil society organisations** (CSOs) can help identify impacts on vulnerable groups and suggest appropriate remediation and corrective actions.
- Internal staff from functions such as buying, merchandising, legal, and finance can offer practical insights into daily operations and help identify feasible solutions.
- **Industry associations, manufacturing associations** and **multi-stakeholder initiatives** (MSIs) can support collective dialogue and shared solutions.

PP-DD Framework Overview

The **PP-DD Framework** brings together recommendations in two key areas:

1. RPP Due Diligence Steps:

A six-step process outlining how companies should integrate Responsible Purchasing Practices throughout the Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) cycle—from policy development to remediation. These Steps define the core components of effective due diligence on purchasing practices.

2. RPP Core Areas:

Three focus areas—**production planning, payment and contract terms, and costing**—that reflect the most common high-risk purchasing practices in the industry. These areas specify the actions companies should take to prevent, mitigate, or cease adverse impacts, particularly as part of Step 3 of the due diligence process, and based on risk assessments conducted in Step 2.

While the **RPP Due Diligence Steps** guide *how* companies should conduct due diligence, the **RPP Core Areas** define *what* specific improvements are expected as a result.

For each Step and RPP Core Area, the Framework outlines **Requirements** for which purchasing companies should be held accountable. These Requirements clarify what companies must do to meet each recommendation and support consistent interpretation and implementation of the Framework.

See page 11 for an overview and pages 12–29 for details.

Key for Graphic

OECD 6-step HRDD cycle

- 1 Embed responsible business conduct into policies & management systems
- 2 Identify & assess adverse impacts in operations, supply chains and business relationships
- 3 Cease, prevent or mitigate adverse impacts
- 4 Track implementation & results
- 5 Communicate how impacts are addressed
- 6 Provide for or cooperate in remediation when appropriate

CFRPP Principles

1. Integration and Reporting
2. Equal Partnership
3. Collaborative Production Planning
4. Fair Payment and Contract Terms
5. Sustainable Costing

OECD 6-step
HRDD cycle

Purchasing Practices HRDD Framework

Step 1:
EMBED**RPP Due Diligence Step 1. Strategic Integration**

The purchasing company has fully integrated Responsible Purchasing Practices into its core business strategy. This integration is supported by board-level commitment, comprehensive policies, clear accountability structures, and dedicated resources that enable effective implementation.

Step 2:
IDENTIFY
& ASSESS**RPP Due Diligence Step 2. Risk & Impact Assessment**

The purchasing company conducts robust Human Rights Due Diligence to systematically assess how its purchasing practices impact working conditions. This includes comprehensive risk assessments informed by stakeholder consultation.

Step 3:
CEASE,
PREVENT,
MITIGATE**RPP Due Diligence Step 3. Continuous Improvement of Purchasing Practices**

The purchasing company develops and implements time-bound improvement plans to address risks and impacts identified through risk assessments, prioritising actions based on saliency and allocating sufficient resources for implementation. These plans include specific improvements to production planning, payment and contract terms and costing practices to prevent and mitigate adverse impacts on workers.

**RPP Core Area 3.1 Collaborative Production Planning**

The purchasing company establishes and implements collaborative critical path and production planning processes with suppliers that prevent and mitigate risks to workers, ensure a fair distribution of commercial risks, and support decent working conditions.

**RPP Core Area 3.2 Fair Payment and Contract Terms**

The purchasing company establishes clear and equitable commercial agreements through transparent contracting processes that protect the interests of both parties. These agreements ensure that payment terms and processes enable suppliers to maintain healthy cash flow and meet their obligations to workers. All contractual commitments are honoured, with financial risks and responsibilities distributed fairly between business partners.

**RPP Core Area 3.3 Sustainable Costing**

The purchasing company's costing strategies—including price levels and negotiation tactics—support human rights by enabling suppliers to provide safe, decent working conditions.

Step 4:
TRACK**RPP Due Diligence Step 4. Implementation Monitoring**

The purchasing company systematically monitors and evaluates the implementation and effectiveness of its purchasing practice improvements, through comprehensive data collection, stakeholder validation, and impact measurement.

Step 5:
COMMUNICATE**RPP Due Diligence Step 5. Transparency**

The purchasing company communicates its Responsible Purchasing Practice commitments, activities and progress transparently through regular public reporting and stakeholder updates. These communications meet industry reporting standards and provide meaningful information that enables accountability.

Step 6:
REMEDiate**RPP Due Diligence Step 6. Remediation Systems**

The purchasing company is responsible for remediating adverse impacts caused or contributed to by its purchasing practices. This includes ensuring affected workers receive adequate remedy and implementing changes to prevent recurrence.



PP-DD Framework in Detail: Steps, Core Areas and Requirements

STEP 1.

RPP Due Diligence Step 1. Strategic Integration



The purchasing company has fully integrated Responsible Purchasing Practices into its core business strategy. This integration is supported by board-level commitment, comprehensive policies, clear accountability structures, and dedicated resources that enable effective implementation.

To demonstrate its commitment, the company is expected to issue a formal policy statement. This may take the form of a standalone RPP policy, a set of related policies, or be incorporated into existing governance documents such as the company's Code of Conduct.

Genuine top-level support is essential for strategic integration. Senior management and board members with relevant expertise should actively oversee the implementation of RPPs. This includes embedding responsible purchasing into governance structures, setting performance targets, and aligning operational policies with the company's human rights commitments.

The company's global sourcing strategy should reflect its responsibility to respect human rights and help close the living wage gap. It should prioritise long-term partnerships with suppliers that support freedom of association and uphold collective bargaining agreements. At the same time, the company should avoid relocating production to regions or suppliers where fundamental human rights are not adequately protected.

To support this strategy, the company should ensure that RPP criteria are integrated into performance metrics and evaluations and invest in interactive training programmes to build awareness and capacity for relevant staff. All personnel who engage with suppliers or influence purchasing practices—such as those in buying, merchandising, legal and finance—should understand the RPP strategy, recognise their role within it, and be equipped to contribute effectively to its implementation.

This strategic integration of RPPs creates the foundation for systemic change in how the company conducts its purchasing relationships.

REQUIREMENT 1.1: Policy commitment on RPPS

The purchasing company establishes a comprehensive and publicly accessible policy framework that clearly demonstrates its commitment to Responsible Purchasing Practices.

This policy framework:

- + **Articulates commitments that either directly reference the five overarching principles of the *Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices* or reflect an equivalent level of ambition in promoting responsible purchasing.**
- + **Is developed in consultation with suppliers, workers or their representatives, and other relevant stakeholders.**
- + **Sets out clear expectations for both the company and its suppliers.**
- + **Explains how purchasing practices support decent working conditions.**
- + **Includes defined accountability mechanisms and timebound reporting commitments.**
- + **Is formally approved by the board and signed by the CEO.**
- + **Is made publicly available (e.g. by publishing it on the company's website).**
- + **Is communicated in a format and language that is accessible to suppliers.**

REQUIREMENT 1.2: Governance structure

The purchasing company maintains clear governance mechanisms to ensure effective oversight and implementation of its RPP commitments.

This governance structure includes:

- + **A senior executive accountable for the implementation of RPPs.**
- + **A board-level committee with specific responsibility for RPP oversight, which regularly reviews performance against established targets.**
- + **Integration of RPP commitments into the company's high-level global sourcing strategy, with a clear emphasis on promoting freedom of association, closing the living wage gap, and building and maintaining long-term supplier partnerships.**
- + **Alignment of departmental objectives to support RPP goals, with defined reporting lines and formal procedures to facilitate collaboration and communication between commercial, sustainability and responsible sourcing functions.**
- + **Integration of RPP metrics into the company's corporate risk management systems.**
- + **Documented procedures for escalating RPP-related issues.**
- + **Embedding of RPP responsibilities into formal performance management frameworks, including job descriptions, recruitment processes, individual objectives, and performance reviews.**
- + **Data systems that enable tracking and incentivisation of individual and/or team performance related to purchasing practices.**

STEP 2.

RPP Due Diligence Step 2. Risk and Impact Assessment



The purchasing company conducts robust Human Rights Due Diligence to systematically assess how its purchasing practices impact working conditions. This includes comprehensive risk assessments informed by stakeholder consultation.

The purchasing company is expected to regularly evaluate risks and impacts to understand how its purchasing practices affect labour standards and human rights in the supply chain. This involves detailed analysis of policies and multiple data sources to identify patterns, understand root causes, and

determine whether specific practices are creating or contributing to human rights risks and negative impacts.

At a minimum, this due diligence step should cover the three RPP Core Areas identified in the *PP-DD Framework*: production planning, payment and contract terms, and costing. Continually re-assessing the risk in these areas allows the company to evaluate the effectiveness of improvement efforts and to support continuous improvement.

Regular risk assessments enable the company to prioritise where action is most urgently needed. The findings should directly inform targeted improvements to purchasing practices (see *RPP Due Diligence Step 3*).

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a critical part of this process.⁴ Input from suppliers, workers, and their legitimate representatives—such as trade unions—is essential for identifying and prioritising risks. Civil society organisations can also provide valuable insights, particularly in contexts where workers are underrepresented or not unionised. Internally, staff such as buyers and merchandisers should be consulted to understand the practical challenges they face in implementing RPPs.

The Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices (CFRPP) serves as a valuable reference point to support stakeholder engagement in identifying human rights risks and opportunities for improvement related to purchasing. It offers a comprehensive overview of Responsible Purchasing Practices (RPPs), encouraging reflection on how specific practices may be linked to human rights impacts and how these could be improved.

REQUIREMENT 2.1:

Risk assessment of purchasing practices

The purchasing company regularly and systematically examines how its purchasing practices may be linked to negative impacts on suppliers and workers in its supply chain. The purchasing practice risk assessment includes:

- ✚ **Analysis of data from multiple sources (e.g. audits, grievances, supplier feedback, and research) to identify risks, impacts, patterns and root causes linked to purchasing practices.**
- ✚ **(At minimum) Coverage of the RPP Core Areas (3.1–3.3) commonly linked to human rights risks: production planning, payment and contract terms, and costing.***
- ✚ **Consultation with suppliers and workers; enabling them to contribute to the risk analysis process.**
- ✚ **Engagement with internal staff responsible for day-to-day implementation of purchasing practices (e.g. buyers and merchandisers) or those acting on the company's behalf.**
- ✚ **Investigation of causal links between commercial pressures and labour risks, including how specific purchasing decisions affect working conditions.**
- ✚ **Review of purchasing policies to assess whether they adequately address risks—taking into account power dynamics, commercial pressures, and other influencing factors—and how effectively they are implemented.**
- ✚ **Consideration of incentive structures and how they may influence purchasing behaviours.**
- ✚ **Assessment of risk severity and likelihood.**
- ✚ **Regular updates and revisions to findings.**

*Whilst the RPP Core Areas (3.1–3.3) outline key requirements that are widely applicable across business types, the purchasing company should also seek to identify additional links between its own practices and human rights risks within its specific operational context (e.g. inaccurate technical specifications, oversampling, late order changes, or unreliable forecasts that may contribute to adverse impacts on workers).



STEP 3.

RPP Due Diligence Step 3. Continuous Improvement of Purchasing Practices



The purchasing company develops and implements time-bound improvement plans to address risks and impacts identified through risk assessments, prioritising actions based on saliency and allocating sufficient resources for implementation.

These plans include specific improvements to production planning, payment and contract terms and costing practices to prevent and mitigate adverse impacts on workers. Companies are expected to regularly review and update these plans as new risks emerge or existing measures prove ineffective (see *RPP Due Diligence Step 2*).

Improvement efforts should focus on making concrete changes to commercial practices that may cause or contribute to human rights risks. While actions should be guided by risk assessment findings, certain high-risk practices—outlined in the RPP Core Areas (3.1–3.3)—require particular attention across the industry. These include production planning, payment and contract terms, and costing, all of which significantly affect working conditions.

A holistic approach is essential. When adjusting practices such as lead times, forecasting, or pricing, companies should consider the broader impact on

workers. For example, efforts to reduce excessive overtime must be balanced with the need for workers to earn a decent income, especially in the absence of living wages. RPP ultimately aims to improve conditions for workers, and thoughtful adjustments to purchasing practices can support this goal.

Where a company has limited leverage due to its size or position in the supply chain, it should collaborate with peers through multi-stakeholder initiatives to co-develop and implement improvement plans.

Finally, improvement plans should be part of a continuous improvement cycle, informed by ongoing monitoring and feedback (see *RPP Due Diligence Step 4*).

REQUIREMENT 3.0:

Improvement plan to address risks

The purchasing company develops and implements an improvement plan to cease, prevent and mitigate risks and adverse impacts, with actions to improve purchasing practices informed by risk assessment findings.

This improvement plan:

- ✚ Is developed with input from stakeholders, including relevant employees (or those acting on the company's behalf), suppliers, and workers or their legitimate representatives.
- ✚ Defines specific actions to prevent or mitigate the identified risks and impacts.
- ✚ Includes interventions to implement Responsible Purchasing Practices, as appropriate (see RPP Core Areas 3.1 – 3.3).
- ✚ Assigns clear responsibility and accountability, along with adequate resources and budget.
- ✚ Sets timeframes and deadlines for implementation.
- ✚ Makes necessary adjustments to company strategy and policies to align them with the improvement plan.
- ✚ Allows for regular review and updates, especially as new risks emerge or circumstances change.
- ✚ Includes structured opportunities for regular, ongoing feedback and dialogue, co-created with stakeholders and conducted safely and anonymously, where appropriate.
- ✚ Establishes mechanisms and metrics to monitor progress and effectiveness (see *RPP Due Diligence Step 4*)



3.1

RPP Core Area 3.1

Collaborative Production Planning



The purchasing company establishes and implements collaborative critical path and production planning processes with suppliers, which prevent and mitigate risks to workers, ensure a fair distribution of commercial risks, and support decent working conditions.

Short lead times, inaccurate forecasts, and delays along the critical path—such as late changes to specifications—can undermine a supplier's ability to plan capacity and operate efficiently. This can result in an over-reliance on temporary labour, excessive overtime, suppressed wages, job insecurity, and even worker dismissals.⁵

In volatile markets with fluctuating consumer demand, production planning carries inherent commercial risks. When power dynamics are imbalanced,

suppliers often bear a disproportionate share of this risk. Purchasing companies might seek very short lead times to better align with market trends before committing to specific styles. However, this approach shifts additional risk onto suppliers, who may be required to invest in large amounts of sampling, invest in materials, reserve factory capacity, or even begin production—without certainty of securing the order. This uncertainty and heightened risk can significantly worsen precarious conditions for workers.⁶

Responsible production planning distributes commercial risk fairly and reflects a shared responsibility to respect workers' human rights. It requires ongoing dialogue between the purchasing company and suppliers to set realistic timelines, manage capacity, and adapt to changes in ways that protect workers and promote stable employment. Planning processes should take into account suppliers' constraints and capabilities, while maintaining clear accountability for decisions that affect working conditions.

Proportional Action Based on Context

The impact of a purchasing company reducing orders or ending a supplier relationship can vary greatly depending on the context. For example, if the company accounts for only a small portion of the supplier's overall business and is the sole client making such a

change at that time, the supplier may be able to manage the disruption with minimal effect on workers.

In contrast, when a supplier is more dependent on the purchasing company, a sudden reduction in orders

presents a heightened risk to workers' rights. In such cases, a more deliberate and proactive strategy, developed collaboratively with the supplier and workers (through trade unions where they exist), is needed to prevent harm.

Similarly, if the consideration to withdraw from a business relationship is driven by broader industry or regional factors, such as geopolitical

instability or infrastructure challenges, it is likely that multiple clients will be considering withdrawal simultaneously. This cumulative reduction in orders can significantly increase the risk to workers' human rights. In these situations, collaboration with a range of stakeholders, including other purchasing companies and workers, can help assess the risks and develop a coordinated strategy to prevent harm.

REQUIREMENT 3.1.1: Timeline and capacity management

The purchasing company establishes clear processes for collaboratively developing and managing production timelines and capacity with suppliers.

The purchasing company ensures production timelines and lead times:

- ✚ **Are jointly developed and agreed upon through equitable negotiation with the supplier before order confirmation.**
- ✚ **Enable suppliers to assess and plan for factory capacity constraints, supporting responsible and realistic production planning.**
- ✚ **Support fair distribution of risk and accountability by:**
 - Clearly documenting the expectations and responsibilities of each party in relation to agreed timelines.
 - Committing in a timely manner to the resources required to fulfil the order (e.g. committing to purchase fabric before it needs to be dyed to specification or booking factory capacity ahead of issuing a purchase order to secure delivery dates). These commitments are binding—for example, the company agrees to use the fabric within a specified

timeframe and cover the cost of reserved factory capacity.

- Taking responsibility when delays or disruptions occur due to its own actions—such as late approvals, post-confirmation order modifications, or order cancellations—and working with the supplier to find solutions that prevent or mitigate negative impacts on the supplier and workers (e.g. revising delivery dates and covering associated costs).
- Sharing responsibility with the supplier for finding mutually agreeable solutions in the event of unforeseen circumstances (e.g. natural disasters, political unrest), ensuring that the burden of disruption is not disproportionately placed on the supplier.
- ✚ **Are reviewed and updated regularly to address feedback and findings from the company's risk assessment of purchasing practices (Requirement 2.1) and improvement plan (Requirement 3.0).**

REQUIREMENT 3.1.2:

Responsible order reduction and exit

The purchasing company maintains robust procedures to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts when significantly reducing orders or ending a supplier relationship. These procedures apply when:

- + **Orders are reduced below what could reasonably be expected based on forecasts or historical volumes, or**
- + **The business relationship is terminated entirely.**

The procedures prioritise the prevention of harm to workers by:

- + **Conducting formal Human Rights Risk Assessments (HRRAs) before finalising decisions to reduce orders or exit a supplier relationship. The HRA is:**
 - Informed by engagement with the supplier and workers (including trade unions, where they exist).
 - Considers the supplier's financial stability and the contextual risks to potentially affected workers (e.g. availability of social safety nets).
- + **If proceeding with exit or significant order reduction, implementing a mitigation strategy that:**
 - Is developed in collaboration with the supplier.
 - Provides written notice periods proportionate to the supplier's order volume and level of dependency, and at minimum, in line with local labour laws and international labour standards.
 - Includes proportionate transition support, such as covering appropriate costs.
 - Ensures affected workers receive all legally mandated compensation, including severance pay (if dismissals

occur), in accordance with national laws, international standards, and collective bargaining agreements (see *RPP Due Diligence Step 6*).

- + **Where the purchasing company fails to follow these procedures; it takes proportionate responsibility for covering related severance payments.**
- + **Maintaining clear documentation throughout the process and providing timely, transparent communication to the supplier, including the rationale for the decision.**
- + **In cases where termination or order reduction is unforeseen (e.g. due to force majeure, geopolitical events, or insolvency), adapting the process to mitigate harm as far as possible within the available time frame.**
- + **Monitoring post-exit impacts on workers to assess and address any unintended consequences of the exit, with follow-up informed by engagement with workers and trade unions where they exist.**
- + **Being reviewed and updated regularly to address feedback and findings from the company's risk assessment of purchasing practices (*Requirement 2.1*) and improvement plan (*Requirement 3.0*).**

3.2

RPP Core Area 3.2

Fair Payment and Contract Terms



The purchasing company establishes clear and equitable commercial agreements through transparent contracting processes that protect the interests of both parties. These agreements ensure that payment terms and processes enable suppliers to maintain healthy cash flow and meet their obligations to workers. All contractual commitments are honoured, with financial risks and responsibilities distributed fairly between business partners.

The purchasing company is expected to ensure that its payment terms and practices support—rather than undermine—suppliers' financial stability and ability to uphold labour rights. When payment terms impose disproportionate financial burdens or payments are delayed, this creates risks to workers' rights.⁷ Conversely, fair and timely payments enable suppliers to meet their financial obligations, including paying workers in full and on time, and cascading timely payments to other enterprises and workers in the supply chain. A responsible approach to payment terms requires consideration of suppliers' cash flow needs and operational realities.

Responsible contracting also involves equitable distribution of responsibility

and liability—both commercially and in addressing human rights risks. When decisions made by the purchasing company lead to additional costs or risks, the purchasing company should assume appropriate financial responsibility rather than shifting the burden onto suppliers.

Similarly, contractual clauses—such as *force majeure*—should not be used to absolve the purchasing company of its HRDD responsibilities. Contract terms should be negotiated fairly and honoured consistently. The purchasing company should engage with both suppliers and workers to verify that it is meeting its own contractual obligations—including those related to Responsible Purchasing Practices—and adapt its approach where necessary.

The **Model Contract Clauses** developed by the **Responsible Contracting Project** offer a practical template for establishing shared responsibility between buyers and suppliers in commercial agreements. This initiative promotes fair and ethical contracting practices that support responsible business conduct and protect workers' rights.

REQUIREMENT 3.2.1: Responsible Contracting Processes

The purchasing company has clear, transparent, and inclusive processes for developing, negotiating, and reviewing contract terms. These processes are designed to ensure fairness, mutual understanding, and continuous improvement, and they allow sufficient time for review, feedback, and revisions. The processes ensure:

- ✚ **Contract terms are negotiated and mutually agreed before any orders are confirmed.**
- ✚ **All agreements are clearly documented in writing and refer to all relevant terms and conditions.**
- ✚ **Contract terms are reviewed and updated regularly to:**
 - Reflect changes in the business relationship.
 - Address feedback and findings from the company's risk assessment of purchasing practices (*Requirement 2.1*) and improvement plan (*Requirement 3.0*).

- ✚ **Any changes to contract terms are mutually agreed upon by both the purchasing company and the supplier.**
- ✚ **Contracts are translated into appropriate languages, where necessary, to support meaningful negotiation.**

Where intermediaries, agents, or other third parties are involved in the sourcing relationship, the purchasing company ensures that clear contractual arrangements are in place across all relevant parties. These arrangements:

- ✚ **Define the respective roles and responsibilities of each party.**
- ✚ **Ensure consistency between the negotiated contract and on-the-ground implementation.**
- ✚ **Uphold HREDD obligations including Responsible Purchasing Practices throughout the full contracting chain.**
- ✚ **Enable factories and suppliers to engage in genuine negotiation regardless of their proximity to the purchasing company.**

REQUIREMENT 3.2.2: Equitable distribution of risk

The purchasing company's contracts with suppliers are designed to foster equitable partnerships by protecting the interests of all parties and establishing clear, mutual expectations. Contract terms:

- ✚ **Reflect shared responsibility for human rights across the supply chain—including the purchasing company—by emphasising collaborative risk management rather than placing the burden of perfect compliance solely on suppliers.**
- ✚ **Include the purchasing company's commitment to implementing Responsible**

Purchasing Practices, in line with the Requirements of this Framework.*

- ✚ **Define shared responsibility for managing unforeseen circumstances that may impact the business relationship.**
- ✚ **Ensure fair cost-sharing for the implementation of human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD) measures between the purchasing company and the supplier.**

*This includes acknowledging the purchasing company's responsibilities within contractual agreements, particularly in relation to RPP Core Areas 3.1–3.3 (e.g., confidentiality clauses to protect supplier information related to costing, as outlined in *Requirement 3.3.1*).

REQUIREMENT 3.2.3:

Fair payment terms

The purchasing company establishes and implements fair, transparent and reliable payment terms and processes, including a system to ensure and monitor on-time payments to suppliers.

The terms and processes:

- +** Are mutually agreed.
- +** Ensure payments are made in full and on time, in accordance with the agreed contract terms.
- +** Provide the supplier with adequate compensation for any resulting impact of the purchasing company failing to meet its payment obligations.
- +** Establish payment timeframes that do not exceed industry good practice (generally 30-60 days).
- +** Provide provisions for advance payments or deposits where needed.
- +** Establish clear handling of additional costs.
- +** Ensure no unauthorised price reductions or retrospective changes.
- +** Ensure any penalties or deductions are:
 - Clearly defined and mutually agreed in advance.
 - Only applied with clear evidence of supplier fault.
 - Proportionate to the supplier's fault* and the resulting damage or problems caused to the buyer.
 - Not applied when delays are caused by the purchasing company.
- +** Ensure regular monitoring of payment performance against agreed terms to ensure on-time payment.



*Where the supplier is not at fault—for example, when production issues arise due to a natural disaster or political unrest—penalties or deductions are not appropriate.

3.3

RPP Core Area 3.3

Sustainable Costing



The purchasing company's costing strategies—including price levels and negotiation tactics— support human rights by enabling suppliers to provide safe, decent working conditions.

When prices fall below the true cost of responsible production or erode supplier margins, labour standards are at risk.⁸

Although a single company's purchase price does not directly determine wages, it strongly influences suppliers' ability to pay fairly. Wages are also shaped by other factors like local laws and collective bargaining, but responsible purchasing should enable and incentivise wage improvements—not hinder them.

As such, prices should (proportionately) cover all costs of responsible production, including decent working conditions and working hours, living wages and incomes, safe workplaces, and sustainability investments, while enabling suppliers to earn reasonable profits and cascade responsible practice through the supply chain. This requires regular dialogue with suppliers to ensure prices reflect actual costs, and engagement with workers to understand the impact on their livelihoods. Companies should routinely assess pricing, adjusting for inflation and market shifts, and establish mechanisms to prevent negotiations that drive prices below responsible levels.

Suppliers should be valued for the full scope of their contributions—such as upholding collective bargaining agreements and supporting wage progression—so pricing comparisons are fair and not based on lower-standard alternatives. Ultimately, the true cost of responsible production must be recognised and upheld.

Wages below living wage levels and incomes below living income levels constitute an infringement of the rights of workers and self-employed persons, respectively, and must be addressed urgently. As part of HRDD*, purchasing companies should work in partnership with their suppliers, as well as with other companies and stakeholders, to achieve living wages for workers in their supply chains—including by promoting freedom of association and collective bargaining.

The expectation is that purchasing practices support this goal. Companies' global sourcing strategies—how they prioritise suppliers and sourcing countries—should align with a commitment to living wages. Purchase prices should be set at levels that cover living wage rates, and purchasing companies should verify that any funds ringfenced for wages are passed on to workers. Where this standard is not met, timebound corrective action plans are needed.

*The PP-DD Framework focuses on the purchasing practices of individual companies, including pricing and sourcing strategies. While collective action by companies to support freedom of association, collective bargaining, and living wages is essential to broader living wage strategies, it falls outside the scope of the Framework's Requirements.

Because sub-living wages are a widespread issue across global supply chains,⁹ a phased and comprehensive living wage strategy is essential. Improving wages can be complex; suppliers often serve multiple brands paying different prices for similar work. A considered approach is needed. This may include proportionate cost contributions toward progressive wage increases—from legal minimums to collectively bargained wages and ultimately to living wages—while using living wage premiums as a transitional measure.

The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** has adopted conclusions on wage policies, including the promotion of living wages. These conclusions outline expectations for living wages and provide key principles for wage setting and estimation. All references to living wages, collective bargaining, and living wage estimates in this document are expected to align with ILO standards.

The **ACT Labour Costing Protocol** outlines two methodologies for determining the labour cost component of an order: the cost-based calculation (CBC) model (e.g. open costing) and the labour share (LS) model. These approaches can be used independently or in combination. Similarly, Fair Wear's **Fair Price methodology** facilitates fact-based costing.

REQUIREMENT 3.3.1: Sustainable costing

The purchasing company's costing strategies enable responsible production while protecting the commercial interests of suppliers.

The purchasing company ensures:

+ The prices it pays are sufficient to cover, in proportion to the product purchased:

- Costs of production, including: all direct and indirect labour costs; materials and overheads; and safe working conditions.
- Social and environmental improvements, including to meet standards specified by the purchasing company.
- Reasonable profit margins for suppliers.

+ Its costing strategies:

- Protect suppliers' confidential business information.
- Use supplier-provided information only for the agreed purpose (e.g. where open costing strategies are in place to improve workers' wages, these are not used to drive down price levels).
- Do not pressure suppliers into action that could negatively impact working conditions (e.g. by expecting cost reductions or wage increases to be achieved through unrealistic efficiency targets).

+ Price levels and costing strategies are reviewed and updated regularly to address feedback and findings from the company's risk assessment of purchasing practices (Requirement 2.1) and improvement plan (Requirement 3.0).



REQUIREMENT 3.3.2:

Living wages

*All references to collective bargaining and living wage estimates are understood to align with the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**'s adopted conclusions on wage policies, including living wages.*

The purchasing company ensures its sourcing and costing strategies actively support freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the payment of living wages.

To achieve this, the purchasing company ensures:

- ✚ **Labour-related costs are isolated as a distinct, non-negotiable component in cost calculations (ring-fenced).**
- ✚ **Workers (including trade unions where they exist) have access to these labour cost calculations.**
- ✚ **Labour costs ringfenced for wages within product pricing are calculated based on the single highest value among the following reference values:**
 - The legal national minimum wage.

- Wages established through collective bargaining.
- Living wage estimates*.

✚ **It prioritises sourcing from countries and suppliers where wages are determined through collective bargaining and/or meet living wage levels. This includes:**

- Avoiding shifts in sourcing away from current suppliers in favour of suppliers or regions where wages fall short of collective bargaining outcomes or living wage levels.
 - Favouring long-term partnerships with suppliers that uphold collective bargaining as the basis for wage-setting and/or meet living wage levels.
- #### ✚ **Where no legally binding collective bargaining agreement is in place, wage verification processes are carried out through meaningful stakeholder engagement with worker representatives and other relevant stakeholders.**

*All living wage estimates have limitations due to the methodologies and assumptions behind them. While these estimates are valuable for informing responsible product pricing, they should support—not replace—social dialogue in wage setting. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that purchasing prices support the payment of living wages. Purchasing companies are expected to incorporate living wage levels into costing and prioritise tangible, near-term improvements for workers over prolonged data analysis.

STEP 4.

RPP Due Diligence Step 4. Implementation Monitoring

OECD
Step 4

The purchasing company systematically monitors and evaluates the implementation and effectiveness of its purchasing practice improvements, through comprehensive data collection, stakeholder validation, and impact measurement.

It is expected to verify whether the actions taken as part of the improvement plan (see *RPP Due Diligence Step 3*) are genuinely preventing or mitigating adverse impacts. For purchasing practices, this means going beyond tracking the completion of planned activities to assessing their actual impact on working conditions and supplier relationships.

To build a complete picture of effectiveness, the company should use multiple data sources and methods. Quantitative metrics on purchasing practices (e.g. on-time payments and forecasting accuracy) should be complemented by qualitative feedback from suppliers and workers.

Regular monitoring enables the company to determine when actions are working as intended, when they are not, where additional measures are needed, and what the overall impact is. This impact supports the continuous refinement of improvement plans.

Monitoring data should inform activities across the HRDD cycle, including risk assessment (*RPP Due Diligence Step 2*); implementation (*RPP Due Diligence Step 3*) and communication (*RPP Due Diligence Step 5*).

REQUIREMENT 4.1: Maintaining a monitoring and evaluation system

The purchasing company maintains a system to track progress and evaluate the effectiveness of its purchasing practice improvements, with the aim of continuous improvement. Key elements of this system include:

- ✚ **Clear metrics and KPIs that define expected outputs, outcomes and impacts, set out within an impact measurement framework.**
- ✚ **Multiple data sources and methods, combining both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive view.**
- ✚ **A regular schedule for data collection, collation and analysis to ensure timely insights.**
- ✚ **Meaningful stakeholder engagement to validate the effectiveness of actions and understand both intended and unintended consequences.**
- ✚ **Independent third-party verification, where appropriate, to enhance credibility and objectivity.**

STEP 5.

RPP Due Diligence Step 5. Transparency



The purchasing company communicates its Responsible Purchasing Practice commitments, activities and progress transparently through regular public reporting and stakeholder updates. These communications meet industry reporting standards and provide meaningful information that enables accountability.

The company is expected to publicly account for how it addresses human rights risks and adverse impacts. In the context of RPPs, this means clearly reporting on commitments made, actions taken, and progress achieved in improving commercial practices that affect working conditions in supply chains.

At a minimum, the company should report annually on both its successes and challenges in implementing RPPs. While some commercial information may be sensitive, the company should strive to disclose meaningful insights into how it is working to prevent and mitigate adverse impacts through its purchasing practices.

In contexts where there are heightened risks of severe human rights impacts, it is essential that the company communicates directly with affected stakeholders to explain how these risks are being managed. Communication

should be tailored to the needs of different stakeholder groups, ensuring that information is accessible, relevant and understandable. Regular updates to affected stakeholders—particularly suppliers and workers—are just as important as formal public reporting.

REQUIREMENT 5.1: Public communications

The purchasing company communicates transparently and publicly about its progress in implementing Responsible Purchasing Practices (RPPs).

These communications include:

- + Demonstration of accountability through at least annual disclosures of RPP commitments, policies and governance structures.**
- + Description of risk and impact assessments conducted as part of the due diligence process.**
- + A high-level overview of improvement plans.**
- + Regular reporting on implementation progress, using monitoring data to substantiate claims and track progress against disclosed plans.**
- + Meaningful and regular engagement with suppliers and other stakeholders, ensuring updates on RPP implementation are consistent, accessible, and relevant—particularly for workers and other affected groups.**

STEP 6.

RPP Due Diligence Step 6. Remediation Systems

OECD
Step 6

The purchasing company is responsible for remediating adverse impacts caused or contributed to by its purchasing practices. This includes ensuring affected workers receive adequate remedy and implementing changes to prevent recurrence.

When the company has caused or contributed to harm, it is expected to provide—or cooperate in providing—effective remediation. In the context of purchasing practices, this means taking concrete action to address harms linked to its decisions or behaviours, such as compensating workers affected by delayed wage payments or ensuring those who lost jobs due to order cancellations are appropriately recompensed.

Remediation for affected workers should take precedence over traditional contract remedies (e.g. order cancellations, payment suspensions, or penalties). If workers are harmed—such as through job loss, unpaid wages, or unsafe conditions—the company must prioritise their compensation and protection before taking contractual actions that could worsen the situation.

The company should establish clear protocols for investigating causal links (see *RPP Due Diligence Step 2*),

determining appropriate remedies, and implementing preventive measures. Where it has contributed to harm, it must share responsibility for remediation alongside suppliers and other involved parties.

Remediation processes should be developed in consultation with affected rightsholders and stakeholders, acknowledging power imbalances that may hinder access to remedy. Their effectiveness should be validated with affected workers or their representatives to ensure the outcomes meet their needs and expectations.

REQUIREMENT 6.1: Remediation protocol

The purchasing company establishes and implements a clear remediation protocol to ensure that remedy is provided in any case where its purchasing practices have caused or contributed to adverse impacts. This protocol:

- ✚ **Is coordinated with operational-level grievance mechanisms.**
- ✚ **Outlines procedures for determining appropriate remedies in consultation with those affected.**
- ✚ **Provides for a fair distribution of costs and responsibilities among all accountable parties.**
- ✚ **Informs regular reviews and updates of policies and processes to prevent recurrence of harm.**

Further Reading and Resources

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Please reach out to your MSI contact or info@cfripp.org if you want to learn more about the *Purchasing Practices HRDD Framework*.

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