

Terms of Reference

ETI Guidance on Responsible Disengagement

Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) seeks an expert consultant to deliver a technical guidance document aimed on responsible disengagement and engagement to inform and enhance brand responsible business practices when making company sourcing decisions.

Reports to:	ETI Senior Advisor on Business Practices
Contract duration:	1 st September – 21 st November 2025 (see timeline in deliverables)
Remuneration:	Agreed fee against invoice submitted (50% at start of contract, and 50% at submission of final report)
Location:	UK, Remote
Main purpose:	Develop a technical guidance on responsible disengagement (including responsible order reduction) and engagement within the context of a global sourcing strategy and responsible purchasing practices. The guidance should be practical and accessible to both human rights/ethical trade specialists and buying/commercial needs.

About ETI

The **Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)** is a ground-breaking alliance of companies, trade unions and voluntary organisations working together to improve the lives of workers in international supply chains. ETI's vision is of a world of work that protects human rights, ensures dignity for all, provides opportunity and is free of exploitation and abuse.

More information can be found on our website at: <http://www.ethicaltrade.org/>

Background to assignment

Under the [Sustainable Textile Initiative: Together for Change \(STITCH\) programme](#), ETI has worked extensively with its members and network to advance responsible business practices. At the same time, we have continued our crisis response efforts through collective action initiatives, many of which include considerations related to responsible disengagement—whether for human rights or commercial reasons (e.g. risk management).

While existing frameworks and policies—developed by ETI and other organisations—already offer recommendations on responsible exit, these require consolidation, strengthening, and alignment with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).

We now aim to build on these workstreams, and previous efforts on responsible disengagement by developing a practical guidance for brands. This guidance will outline responsible business behaviour in identifying human rights risks associated with shifts in sourcing and provide practical steps for brands to adopt. Changes in sourcing in this context could include significant order reduction, terminating business relationships and increasing sourcing in new regions—and ensuring these risks inform sourcing decisions and processes.

The guidance is intended to be sector-agnostic to ensure broad applicability across industries, with sector-specific sections supported by case studies. However, we remain open to revising this approach and may choose to focus on the garment and footwear sector if a compelling reason arises during the development of the report.

The guidance will support brands in managing transitions between sourcing locations in a way that ensures their global sourcing strategies uphold their responsibility to actively support human rights—including freedom of association, collective bargaining and the payment of living wages.

Intended audience: Commercial / procurement and ethical trade / human rights teams within brands.

Key deliverables

	Activity	Deliverable(s)
1	Bench-marking exercise to set the scene and provide framing for the overall technical guidance, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) What work has already been done on responsible disengagement? (ii) What key areas have already been explored? (iii) What gaps still exist to support brands on practical action 	Technical guidance pre- amble/appendix by 12th September
2	Develop a technical guidance for brands to ensure that significant order reductions, terminations of business relationships, and global sourcing decisions are carried out responsibly and in alignment with their human rights due diligence obligations. The guidance should include examples of good practices and case studies. <p>Key considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guidance should be practical for brands, with the guidance provided being applicable at scale to different contexts. • The guidance should be approximately 20-30 pages once designed. • Responsible purchasing practice requirements as set out in the forthcoming Purchasing Practices HRDD Framework. • Applicability to live challenges such as decline in sourcing from Türkiye, changes in global tariffs etc. 	Technical guidance document to be designed for website publication by 17th October

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ETI's Just Transitions work: sourcing shifts in light of the climate crisis (including direct impacts such as extreme heat or shifts to new products and processes). Consideration of key engagement principles as set out in the Framework on Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement (MSE) 	
3	Stakeholder consultation on draft guidance: With support from the ETI secretariat, lead and organise two consultation workshops with ETI's partners and members.	1x consultation workshop with external stakeholders, including suppliers, STITCH partners etc. 1x consultation with ETI brands By 7 th November
4	Editing and delivery of final document following the stakeholder consultation and dissemination of final technical guidance through a final presentation of guidance to brands <i>Note: ETI will be responsible for the final document/website design in accordance with organisational branding</i>	Edited and revised final document Final presentation of guidance to brands by 21 st November
5	Regular check-ins with ETI secretariat via project manager	Ongoing

ETI will provide the consultant with all background documentation and resources needed, as well as a presentation of the work already conducted both through the STITCH programme and by the ETI Collective Action Team. The consultant will be responsible for all other aspects of the deliverables as described above including practical logistics.

Skills and experience

- Knowledge and experience working on these topics and in relation to garment supply chains.
- Strong business acumen and proven experience in developing practical guidance documents and toolkits for companies.
- Strong research, analytical, and strategic thinking skills – ability to analyse complex data sets, provide recommendations and translate theoretical principles and requirement into practical advice in plain language.
- Experience working across teams in a collaborative manner.
- Experience of working with organisations for a short length of time but with a focus on quality delivery and timely execution of tasks.
- Excellent report writing skills (English).
- Demonstrated experience in facilitation of meetings with companies, NGOs and trade unions.
- Excellent relationship building – strong networking, influencing and stakeholder management skills.

Application process

Please email applications for this consultancy to hr@eti.org.uk by **8am GMT on Monday 4th August 2025**, with the subject line '**STITCH Responsible Disengagement Consultancy**'.

Applications should include:

1. A cover letter (max. 2 pages) outlining your suitability for the role, your proposed fee, number of days required, and availability.
2. Copy of latest CV(s).
3. Examples of previous work/assignments that demonstrate required skillset (e.g. links to publicly available documents).

Please note: Interviews will be held on **13 August 2025**. Kindly keep this date available.