



Ethical Trading Initiative
Respect for workers worldwide



HOMEWORKER GUIDELINES

WHAT RETAILERS CAN DO

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HOMEWORKER GUIDELINES

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Contents

1	Introduction	2
1.1	Background	2
1.2	About the ETI guidelines	2
1.3	Why should retailers take action?	3
2	What retailers can do	4
2.1	A step-by-step approach	4
2.2	Taking effective action	4
3	Getting started	6
3.1	Understand what good working conditions look like	6
3.2	Make a commitment	8
3.3	Inform everyone of your commitment	8
3.4	Map your supply chains	9
3.5	Find out more about homeworkers in your supply chain	11
3.6	Decide where to start	11
4	Taking action	12
4.1	Applying codes of labour practice to homeworkers	12
4.2	Work with your suppliers	16
4.3	Take action in your own company	17
4.4	Work with other stakeholders	18
5	Monitoring progress	19

Annexes

A	Model policy on homeworking – for use by retailers and suppliers	21
B	Sources of information on homeworke involvement and conditions	23
C	Sample questionnaire for sending to suppliers	25
D	Questions for homeworkers in developed economies	27
E	Model log book for use by homeworkers	28

1 Introduction

These guidelines set out the steps that retailers can take to help improve the working conditions of homeworkers. The aim of the guidelines is to help retailers implement internationally agreed labour standards with homeworkers, specifically those set out in the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Base Code.

1.1 Background

Homeworkers are a valuable part of the supply chain for many retailers. They are involved in producing a wide range of hand-crafted products, such as embroidered and sequinned garments and accessories, as well as working in industries such as footwear, electrical assembly and plastic products, packaging and labelling, and doing non-traditional handwork for products such as footballs.

Homeworkers can be found in countries from Portugal to Pakistan and Italy to Indonesia. There are an estimated 300 million homeworkers in the developing world, and approximately 5% of those in employment in Northern countries are homeworkers. There may be as many as 1 million homeworkers in the UK alone.

Despite their importance, homeworkers are among the most vulnerable and marginalised workers in the supply chain, often having no legal status, no job security, and working in unsafe and unhygienic conditions for very low wages.

One way in which retailers and others are trying to address and improve this situation, is to apply codes of labour practice and the principles of ILO Convention 177 on Home Work (which promotes equality of treatment between homeworkers and other wage earners) to homeworkers. However, it can be particularly challenging to ensure that these codes of practice are applied and followed because of the complexity of supply chains involving homeworkers.

Further information: For additional information about homeworkers including the types of work they do and the conditions they work under, see 'Homeworkers and homeworking: An introduction', at www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/homeworkers-project/guidelines. Details of the ETI Base Code and ILO Convention 177 can also be found at www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/homeworkers-project/guidelines.

1.2 About the ETI guidelines

These guidelines provide **practical guidance to retailers** about:

- **identifying the presence of homeworking in supply chains;** and
- **implementing and monitoring the ETI Base Code with homeworkers.**

The guidelines are concerned with homeworkers who are **home-based subcontracted or home-based dependent workers working for an employer, intermediary or subcontractor for a piece rate**. They do not address other home-based workers such as business people and professionals working at home.

They have been developed in consultation with, and for, members of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI). However, they will be equally useful for any retailer looking to apply codes of labour practice and improve the working conditions for homeworkers in their supply chains. Further information on ETI can be found at www.ethicaltrade.org. Details on how the guidelines were developed can be found at www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/homeworkers-project/guidelines along with a wealth of other information including guidance for suppliers and other players in the supply chain, case studies and practical tools on addressing homeworkers' conditions.

1.3 Why should retailers take action?

Homeworking is an important aspect of the world economy, present in a huge range of sectors and countries. Homeworkers themselves form an essential part of the supply chain. Not only do they carry out specialised and intricate work that often cannot be mechanised cost effectively, such as embroidery and beading, but they also provide much-needed flexibility in production as they can be asked to carry out more or less work depending on peaks and troughs in demand. However, this flexibility also means that homeworkers face increased risk of labour rights violations and presents challenges for retailers wanting to ensure good working conditions.

Many retailers have homeworkers in their supply chain – whether they are aware of them or not. In some countries they form an intrinsic part of the supply chain/production and will inevitably be involved somewhere in the production process – and evidence suggests that they are likely to be working under poor conditions.

Failing to address homeworkers' conditions presents a business risk to retailers in terms of:

- Quality of work.
- Security of supply and interruptions to production.
- Poor compliance with codes/standards.
- Negative public opinion.

Working to improve conditions for homeworkers can have real benefits, such as:

- Reduced reputation risk and enhanced public image.
- Better quality products and improved relationships with suppliers.
- Better living standards and conditions for homeworkers – the poorest workers in your supply chains.

Further information: See www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/homeworkers-project/guidelines for more information on the business reasons why retailers should take action.

2 What retailers can do

This section provides an overview of the key steps you can take to manage your supply chains in a way that does not discriminate against homeworkers, and some helpful hints on making actions more effective.

2.1 A step-by-step approach

There is a series of steps you can follow to explore and start addressing homeworking issues. These can be carried out across your whole supply chain, or you can phase your approach depending on resources and priorities.

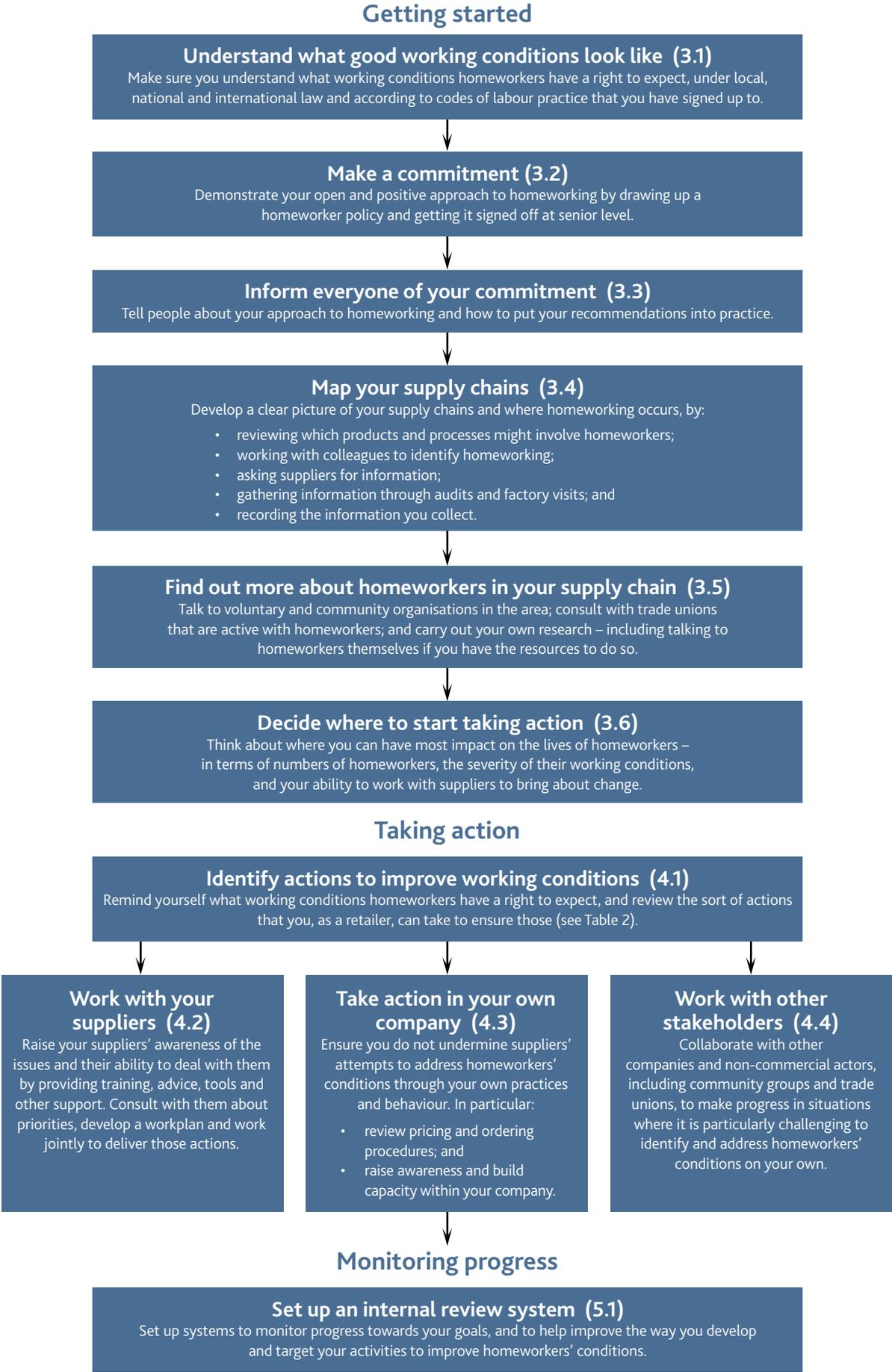
Figure 1 provides an overview of the steps you can take to identify homeworkers, find out more about their conditions, and take action where these fall short of codes of labour practice. Further details are set out in sections 3–5 of these guidelines.

2.2 Taking effective action

Whatever stage you are at – from planning to implementation – these guiding principles will help make your actions more effective.

- **Treat this as an ongoing process.** As you start to follow the steps set out in Figure 1, it will become clear that this isn't a one-off process. Instead, you will probably have to repeat steps before fully understanding your supply chains; you may complete the steps for selected supply chains before starting on others; or you may need to re-do steps on the basis of findings from your monitoring process.
- **Aim for continuous improvement.** You are likely to find that many homeworkers' conditions fall short of the standards in the ETI Base Code. Although you won't be able to address them all at once, you should aim for steady progress in implementing agreed actions within agreed timescales, and thus start improving the livelihoods of homeworkers in your supply chains.
- **Learn from others.** Experience from retailers who have already embarked on this journey will be invaluable. These guidelines incorporate the learning from ETI members who are actively working on these issues. Their feedback highlights the need to:
 - Understand your supply chain (see Section 3.4).
 - Work towards transparency.
 - Develop long-term relationships (see Section 4.2).
 - Establish trust with all partners.
 - Start with achievable actions (see Section 4).
 - Take a combination of actions.
- **Develop partnerships.** These guidelines focus mainly on what you can do in your own company and supply chains to help improve homeworkers' conditions. However, in many cases, you will only be able to make progress if you work collaboratively with other commercial and non-commercial partners, such as trade unions, local community organisations or other retailers. Further information on taking a collaborative approach is set out in Section 4.4.

Figure 1. What retailers can do: A stepped approach to improving working conditions for homeworkers



3 Getting started

Most retailers will need to carry out some preliminary work before starting to address homeworkers' conditions. Initial activities – such as being clear about what good working conditions look like, making a commitment, mapping supply chains and finding out more about homeworkers – will help you build up a picture of what needs doing and where to start.

3.1 Understand what good working conditions look like

You need to be clear what working conditions homeworkers have a right to expect, so that you know which fall short of good labour practice and what to aim for when planning how to develop improvement plans.

Before getting started, you need to be aware of the working conditions that homeworkers have a right to expect – under local, national and international law, and according to any codes of labour practice that you have signed up to. This will help you develop your policy and approach, identify where conditions for homeworkers are particularly poor, and what you need to do to address that. The ETI Base Code is a good starting point for understanding what good working conditions look like.

The ETI Base Code sets out the minimum working conditions that members of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) should expect suppliers to provide to their workers, including homeworkers. The Base Code is based on the standards of the International Labour Organisation and is therefore relevant for all retailers looking to ensure good conditions for homeworkers.

A summary of the Code and what that means in the case of homeworkers is shown in **Table 1**. This is explored further in Section 4, which sets out further details of working conditions you might find among homeworkers (Table 2) and the range of actions you can take – in your own company, with suppliers and with other stakeholders – to help improve them.

Further information: The full text ETI Base Code can be found at: www.ethicaltrade.org/resources/key-eti-resources/eti-base-code. A leaflet for suppliers and contractors, which summarises those conditions, can be found at www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/homeworkers-project/guidelines.

Table 1. What the ETI Base Code means for homeworkers

ETI Base Code 1: Employment is freely chosen.

- Homeworkers must not be subjected to forced or bonded labour.
- They must be carrying out homework on a voluntary basis.
- Their wages should not be withheld or delayed, and they should not be forced to work to pay off their debts.

ETI Base Code 2: Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are respected.

- Homeworkers have the right to establish or join organisations and trade unions of their own choosing, to participate in the activities of such organisations, and to engage in collective bargaining on issues related to their work.
- Homeworker representatives, or those organising homeworkers, should not be discriminated against.

ETI Base Code 3: Working conditions are safe and hygienic.

- A safe and hygienic work environment should be provided, taking into consideration existing knowledge of the industry and any specific hazards.
- Adequate steps should be taken to prevent accidents and injury to homeworkers arising out of their work, by minimising the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment, and enhancing their health and wellbeing.
- Homeworkers should receive regular and recorded health and safety training.
- The company observing the code should assign responsibility for health and safety of homeworkers to a senior management representative.

ETI Base Code 4: Child labour shall not be used.

- Companies should develop or participate in and contribute to policies and programmes which provide for the transition of any child found to be performing child labour to enable her or him to attend and remain in quality education until no longer a child.
- Children and young persons under 18 should not be employed at night or in hazardous conditions.

ETI Base Code 5: Living wages are paid.

- Homeworkers should be paid rates equivalent to or greater than the minimum wage defined in national legislation or industry benchmark standards, whichever is the higher, for all work carried out.
- Where there is no minimum wage defined for homework, the rates should be equivalent to the minimum wage defined for a factory worker doing the same task.
- Homeworkers should be paid promptly and given an itemised pay slip indicating the piece rate of pay and the amount, cause and nature of deductions. Where possible, homeworkers should be given a clear written agreement of terms and conditions of employment.

ETI Base Code 6: Working hours are not excessive.

- Homeworkers should be made aware of the hazards of excessive work.
- Homeworkers should not be forced to work more hours than they wish and should never be coerced into working excessive hours.

ETI Base Code 7: No discrimination is practised.

- There is no discrimination in offering homework based on race, caste, national origin, religion, age, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, union membership or political affiliation as stated.
- Homeworkers shall not be offered lower rates of pay than factory workers doing the same work.

ETI Base Code 8: Regular employment is provided.

- Homeworkers should enjoy social security benefits and holiday/maternity pay, etc, comparable to other workers, even where these are not a statutory requirement for homeworkers.
- Wherever possible retailers should endeavour to ensure a regular supply of work and should communicate anticipated fluctuations of business at all levels.

ETI Base Code 9: No harsh or inhumane treatment is allowed.

- Physical abuse or discipline, the threat of physical abuse, sexual or other harassment and verbal abuse or other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited.
- This includes any form of coercion related to work at the household level.

Note: The full text of the ETI Base Code can be found at: www.ethicaltrade.org/resources/key-eti-resources/eti-base-code.

3.2 Make a commitment

The first step to improving homeworkers' conditions is to demonstrate your company's acceptance of the role that homeworkers play in the supply chain and the responsibility you have towards them.

All stakeholders, including your suppliers and colleagues, need to be clear what your position is on homeworkers. Showing that you have an open and positive approach to homeworking, and that you are committed to improving homeworkers' conditions, will help prevent them excluding homeworkers from your supply chain or concealing the fact that they are there.

The best way of doing this is to **adopt a formal policy on homeworkers**. Your policy should:

- Acknowledge the important role of homeworkers in supply chains.
- Openly accept the presence of homework within supply chains.
- Include your commitment to help ensure good labour conditions for homeworkers.
- Differentiate between 'unauthorised subcontracting' (ie where the entire production process is subcontracted without your knowledge or approval) and subcontracting particular processes that are carried out by homeworkers.
- Be signed off by senior management, to demonstrate their commitment.

Further information: You can find a **model policy** in **Annex A**, which could be used as the basis for developing your own. Examples of other retailers' homeworker policies can be found at www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/homeworkers-project/guidelines.

ETI members have found that adopting a positive homeworker policy is the best way to find out whether you have homeworkers in your supply chains. 'No homeworker' policies have led to concealment of homeworking, which makes it more difficult to tackle and improve homeworkers' conditions and presents a hidden risk to your company's reputation.

3.3 Inform everyone of your commitment

It's not enough to make a commitment to homeworkers – you need to tell people about your company's policy and approach.

People need to know about your approach to homeworking and how to implement your recommendations for working with homeworkers, so that they don't deliberately or inadvertently undermine your attempts to address homeworkers' conditions.

Key people you should be telling:

- **Colleagues** – particularly buyers, technologists and sourcing teams – need to be aware of your company's policy and approach so that homeworkers aren't actively excluded from supplying products or negatively affected by buying, technical or sourcing practices.
- **Agents and suppliers** need to know that the presence of homeworkers in the supply chain will not in itself lead to you cancelling orders or taking work away from them. This should help stop them excluding or concealing homeworkers.

You can tell people about your policy and approach, and how to put this into practice, by including information in:

- Training courses for buyers and suppliers.
- Guidance documentation and manuals for suppliers and buyers.
- Meetings with suppliers and agents, including when starting up new relationships.
- Contracts and documentation with suppliers and agents.

You can find more suggestions about communicating and building capacity with colleagues and suppliers in sections 4.2 and 4.3.

3.4 Map your supply chains

You need to know where homeworking occurs in your supply chain before you can start improving homeworkers' conditions. Comprehensive supply chain mapping is an essential step in that process.

It's vital that you understand your supply chains – including where homework occurs within them – **before** trying to improve homeworkers' labour conditions. Without a full understanding of the complex supply chains beneath them, retailers' actions may prove counter-productive, even damaging to the livelihoods of homeworkers. For example, when retailers and brands tried to prevent child labour in football production by banning children from working, it resulted in many thousands of homeworkers and children being deprived of employment, which aggravated their poverty and drove them into more dangerous work.

A combination of approaches can be used to map where homeworking occurs, as shown below. Input from your colleagues and suppliers will be essential during this process.

3.4.1 Identify potential homeworker involvement

Homeworking can occur in a wide range of industries, sectors and products, in many different countries, and it will not always be obvious that homeworkers are involved in making your products or in your supply chains. **Annex B** provides further information on trade unions, NGOs and other organisations you can use to help you identify potential homeworker involvement and the product chains you should be mapping.

3.4.2 Work with your colleagues

Work with staff in-country and/or in regional offices, as well as with buyers and technical teams, to identify and address homework issues. You will need to consult with national-level staff to ensure that everyone understands the complexity and importance of the issue, so that they can help you identify the industries in which homeworking is likely to occur. (For example, quality assurance teams have discovered homeworking when trying to improve their control of production processes.)

3.4.3 Ask your suppliers for information

Your suppliers are a key source of information on where homeworking might occur in their supply chains. You will need to encourage suppliers to work with you to investigate and record full details of the supply chain. However, you may need to spend time raising awareness and motivating them to do this, particularly if they are not fully aware of homeworkers' involvement in the chain. You will also need to explain your policy on homeworking to them, in particular stressing that you are not against the use of homeworkers.

Annex C contains an example of a questionnaire you can use to gather information from suppliers, and an example of what that might look like when completed. If your suppliers are agents, ask them to enquire about homework among their own suppliers.

Further information: For more hints about working with suppliers to map and address homeworkers' conditions, see Section 4.2 and 'Mapping homeworkers: How ETI retailer members are identifying homeworkers in their supply chains' (www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/homeworkers-project/guidelines).

3.4.4 Gather information through audits and assessments

Build questions about homeworking – and subcontracting of processes that may be carried out by homeworkers – into assessments/audits of suppliers. Ensure that questioning techniques help you draw out the information you need to know. You will need to encourage suppliers to be open about the use of homeworking; effective communication with suppliers on this sensitive issue is essential. Consider carrying out audits of subcontractors (where you are aware of them) as well as the main factory or head office.

3.4.5 Gather information during factory visits

Factory visits can be a good way of identifying whether homeworking might be happening in particular product lines. Make sure you understand the different production processes, so that when you are visiting a factory you can identify which processes do not appear to be being carried out at the factory. For example, if you can only see checking, finishing or packing, ask where the production facility is.

Consider whether there are processes in this product that could be easily outsourced – as outsourced work may be done by homeworkers. Outsourcing tends to happen when:

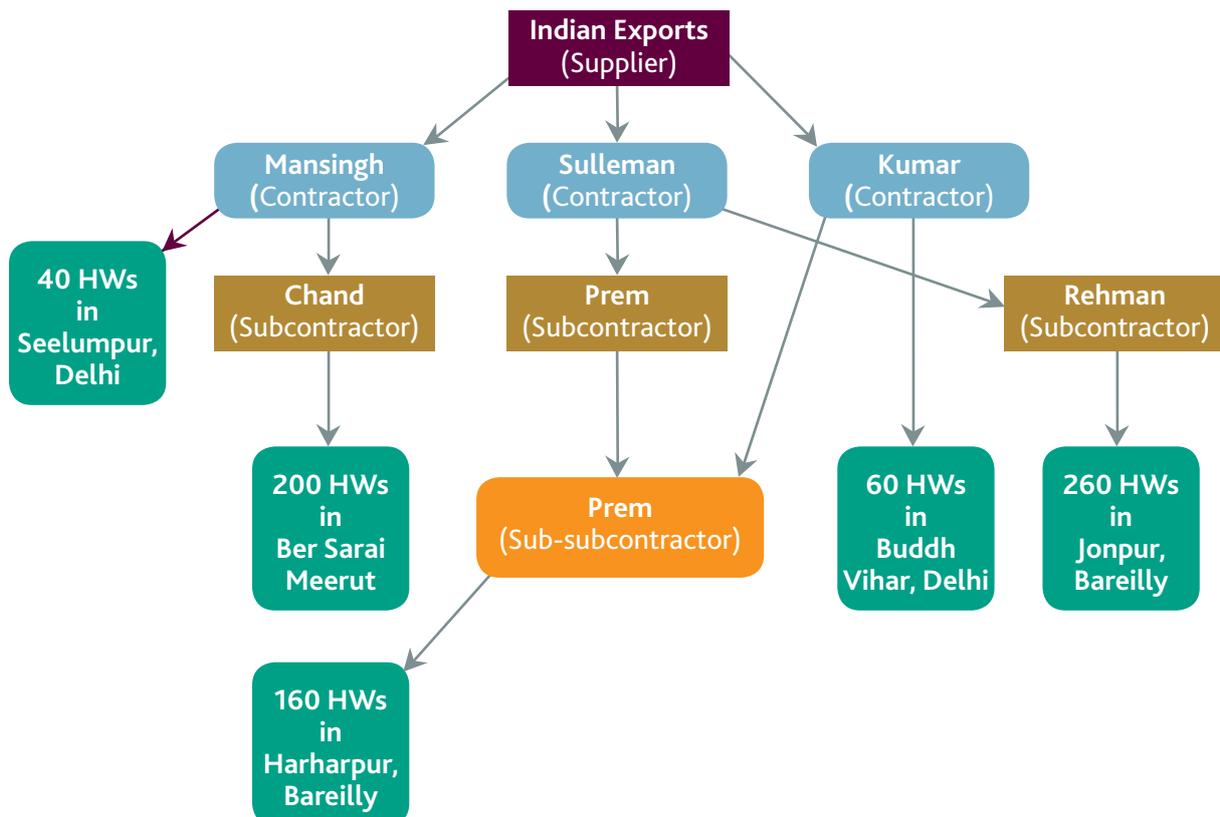
- the operation is not reliant on expensive equipment;
- hand operation is required (such as packing);
- the product is produced occasionally rather than regularly;
- the cost of mechanising the process is significantly larger than the cost of paying workers to carry it out by hand (for example, embroidery); and/or
- the capital cost of mechanisation is very large relative to the operation.

Ask the factory manager to clarify whether outsourcing is taking place and, if so, where. If necessary, speak with contractors and/or visit some locations. Remember that the factory may not be aware that homeworkers are involved; they just know that work is outsourced to a contractor.

3.4.6 Record information on homeworking

Information gathered from these sources will help you build a picture of your supply chain. An example of a supply chain map that includes homeworkers is shown in **Figure 2** below.

Figure 2. Example of a supply chain map



Ensure that you record information on homeworkers in the same way as other supplier data (eg data collected through audits). Remember also to identify and record **good** practices among suppliers, such as where contractors give interest-free credit to homeworkers or provide scholarships to children.

Encourage suppliers to maintain data on their contractors, starting with their first-tier contractors as a first step (see **Annex C**).

3.5 Find out more about homeworkers in your supply chain

What are conditions currently like for homeworkers in your supply chains? Carrying out research will help you identify issues and concerns that homeworkers and others may have about their working situation.

During this initial phase of activities you will need to find out more about conditions for homeworkers in your supply chain, so that you can identify where conditions fall short of those in the ETI Base Code. This process may take a while, depending on resources and the nature of particular supply chains, but you should be able to build up a picture over time as you start working with suppliers, colleagues and other stakeholders.

The following sources of information should help provide insight:

- **Annex B** contains a list of published studies that might make a good starting point.
- Contact voluntary and community organisations for further information – particularly those working in the locality where you have identified homeworkers. The organisations listed in **Annex B** might be able to help, or could direct you to other local sources of information.
- Consult with trade unions who are actively organising homeworkers or who are organising among the factories supplying work to homeworkers (see **Annex B**).
- If you have the resources to conduct your own studies, then you can gather information from homeworkers themselves about issues and concerns they have about their working conditions. **Annex D** contains examples of questionnaires that can be used with homeworkers to establish basic facts and attitudes.

3.6 Decide where to start

Information gathered from the mapping exercise and any other research you have done will help you identify where to start taking action to improve homeworkers' conditions.

You are unlikely to be able to start addressing all homeworke-related issues at once. It could be some time before you have a picture of homeworking across the whole of your supply chain, but you should be able to start tackling issues in those chains where you have managed to build up a good picture of the situation. Your mapping and analysis will help you decide where to start and what to do first.

Think about where you can have most impact on the lives of homeworkers – in terms of the numbers of homeworkers involved, the severity of the conditions they are working under, and your ability to work with suppliers to bring about change.

For example, you may decide to begin implementing actions with homeworkers where:

- You have simpler supply chains (fewer contractors between the supplier and homeworkers).
- Your supply chains are relatively stable (eg not those for short-term fashion items).
- You have long-term/strong relationships with suppliers (who in turn have strong relationships with their contractors).
- The largest number of homeworkers are concentrated.
- Several suppliers lead back to a small group of homeworkers in the same area.
- There is a large gap between the working conditions set out in the ETI Base Code and those being experienced by homeworkers (eg where wages or other conditions are very poor).
- Local community groups are able to work with you.
- Local trade unions are actively organising homeworkers or organising in factories supplying work to homeworkers. (Trade unions can enable democratic representation of homeworkers and can be the best way of enabling workers themselves to quickly and fairly resolve any problems that may arise.)

Remember, your priorities may differ in different contexts according to local and national customs, practices and legislation. In all cases, you should talk to your suppliers, other organisations and, where possible, homeworkers about where to start.

4 Taking action

Once you have enough information about your supply chains, there are a range of actions you can take – in your own company, with suppliers and others – to improve working conditions for homeworkers.

4.1 Identify actions to improve working conditions

You need to be clear what working conditions homeworkers have a right to expect, so that you can identify areas that fall short of good labour practice and review possible actions to address them.

Remind yourself what good working conditions look like in the context of homeworking (as introduced in Section 3.1). A summary of the Code and how to interpret it in the case of homeworkers is shown in **Table 2**. The table also sets out some actions that you can take – in your own company, with suppliers and with other stakeholders – to help ensure those working conditions are met in your supply chain. These are explored in more detail in sections 4.2–4.4.

Table 2. Applying the ETI Base Code to homeworkers: Actions for retailers

ETI Base Code and what it means for homeworkers	What this might look like in reality	What retailers should do
<p>ETI Base Code 1: Employment is freely chosen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeworkers must not be subjected to forced or bonded labour. • They must be carrying out homework on a voluntary basis. • Their wages should not be withheld or delayed, and they should not be forced to work to pay off their debts. 	<p>What this may look like: Homeworkers may be indebted to intermediaries and therefore not able to change which contractor they work for.</p> <p>Likelihood of breach: Medium</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with local NGOs and trade unions to identify if debt-bondage is a problem and follow up.
<p>ETI Base Code 2: Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are respected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeworkers have the right to establish or join organisations and trade unions of their own choosing, to participate in the activities of such organisations, and to engage in collective bargaining on issues related to their work. • Homeworker representatives, or those organising homeworkers, should not be discriminated against. 	<p>What this may look like: Traditional trade union methods of organisation cannot work where homeworkers are scattered and competing for work. However, homeworkers may form or work with homeworker organisations to discuss common problems and solutions.</p> <p>Likelihood of breach: Low chance that homeworkers' union rights are actively breached, but highly likely that homeworkers are unable to associate and bargain collectively.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognise homeworkers' right to join or form unions or other associations. 2. Encourage suppliers to recognise unions representing on-site workers, and ensure that unions and employers agree appropriate ways to include homeworkers in consultation and negotiation. 3. Work with homeworker organisations to consult homeworkers about their needs and issues, and encourage suppliers to do the same. 4. Work with suppliers to develop ways they (suppliers) can keep relevant records of union representatives and meetings. 5. Work with suppliers, NGOs and trade unions to develop a confidential complaints system.
<p>ETI Base Code 3: Working conditions are safe and hygienic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A safe and hygienic work environment should be provided, taking into consideration existing knowledge of the industry and any specific hazards. • Adequate steps should be taken to prevent accidents and injury to homeworkers arising out of their work, by minimising the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment, and enhancing their health and wellbeing. • Homeworkers should receive regular and recorded health and safety training. • The company observing the code should assign responsibility for health and safety of homeworkers to a senior management representative. 	<p>What this may look like: Conditions in homes may be poor, especially in terms of lighting (needed when detailed work is being done), and ventilation (important if toxic substances such as glues or soldering are used).</p> <p>Likelihood of breach: High</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with suppliers and other stakeholders to identify industry-specific potential hazards, and establish safe working procedures for homeworkers. 2. Inform suppliers that homeworkers should not be given hazardous work. 3. Encourage suppliers to work with trade union H&S representatives and to formally consult with a H&S committee. 4. Encourage suppliers to assign responsibility for H&S of homeworkers to a senior management representative. 5. Advise and support suppliers to provide training and equipment to control work health hazards. 6. Ask suppliers for records of H&S training and other H&S measures provided to homeworkers.

ETI Base Code and what it means for homeworkers	What this might look like in reality	What retailers should do
<p>ETI Base Code 4: Child labour shall not be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies should develop or participate in and contribute to policies and programmes which provide for the transition of any child found to be performing child labour to enable her or him to attend and remain in quality education until no longer a child. Children and young persons under 18 should not be employed at night or in hazardous conditions. 	<p>What this may look like: Homeworkers often receive piece rates which are too low to support their families; the only way to make ends meet is by their children (especially girls) helping in production – which may interfere with their education. Children may also be employed in hazardous processes when producing jewellery, glass and metal products.</p> <p>Likelihood of breach: High</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby for and/or help fund programmes (with, government, NGOs and trade unions) to increase access to formal, quality education by homeworkers' children, at the closest point (eg village or ward). Encourage suppliers to work with trade unions and homeworker organisations to develop and implement policies on the use of child labour. Support suppliers to develop methods of positively rewarding HW families that send their children to school and carry out awareness programmes to help them fully understand the issues of children in homeworking families.
<p>ETI Base Code 5: Living wages are paid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeworkers should be paid rates equivalent to or greater than the minimum wage defined in national legislation or industry benchmark standards, whichever is the higher, for all work carried out. Where there is no minimum wage defined for homework, the rates should be equivalent to the minimum wage defined for a factory worker doing the same task. Homeworkers should be paid promptly and given an itemised pay slip indicating the piece rate of pay and the amount, cause and nature of deductions. Where possible, homeworkers should be given a clear written agreement of terms and conditions of employment. 	<p>What this may look like: Few homeworkers receive the minimum wage and even fewer receive a living wage. Record keeping is poor or non-existent and pay may be reduced further through unfair deductions. Wages may be paid irregularly and in some cases only partial payments are made to keep workers tied to contractors.</p> <p>Likelihood of breach: High</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work with suppliers to negotiate product costs that cover piece rates equal to or higher than minimum wage for homeworkers. Carry out internal training for purchasing teams on how to negotiate prices where homeworkers are involved, and how to ensure minimum wage for homeworkers is met. Support suppliers to use standardised systems for setting piece rates for homeworkers, and systems to ensure that homeworkers receive these when working on your orders. Encourage sourcing from HW cooperatives (where they exist), or from homeworkers who are represented by a trade union. Assess your own commercial practices, to identify reasons for delay in payments to homeworkers and to take remedial measures. Develop practices to ensure prompt payments throughout your supply chain. Review commercial practices (including the use of financial penalties) and how these might affect the payment of a 'living wage' to homeworkers.
<p>ETI Base Code 6: Working hours are not excessive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeworkers should be made aware of the hazards of excessive work. Homeworkers should not be forced to work more hours than they wish and should never be coerced into working excessive hours. 	<p>What this may look like: Work is usually irregular, which means that working hours vary widely. Homeworkers may be asked to work long hours with no overtime pay, but are unlikely to refuse if there is no guarantee of regular work.</p> <p>Likelihood of breach: Medium, but not a top priority for homeworkers who are usually more concerned about earning enough to live on than working long hours.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid placing unreasonable deadlines for orders. When short deadlines are given, provide payment incentives, a proportion of which must be passed on to homeworkers. Support suppliers to develop systems to ensure that long working hours are not imposed and that fair overtime rates are paid.

ETI Base Code and what it means for homeworkers	What this might look like in reality	What retailers should do
<p>ETI Base Code 7: No discrimination is practised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no discrimination in offering homework based on race, caste, national origin, religion, age, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, union membership or political affiliation as stated. Homeworkers shall not be offered lower rates of pay than factory workers doing the same work. 	<p>What this may look like: Homeworkers often earn less than factory workers doing the same work. Women are often only offered the lower paid work within a sector, and are often paid less than men for the same work.</p> <p>Likelihood of breach: Medium</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work with supplier/contractor/NGOs/TU to set up mechanisms for redressing grievances. Encourage suppliers and contractors to recognise trade unions and/or homeworker organisations, and to consult with them over a grievance procedure. Encourage suppliers to establish methods to ensure women and children are paid for their work.
<p>ETI Base Code 8: Regular employment is provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeworkers should enjoy social security benefits and holiday/maternity pay, etc. comparable to other workers, even where these are not a statutory requirement for homeworkers. Wherever possible, retailers should endeavour to ensure a regular supply of work and should communicate anticipated fluctuations of business at all levels. 	<p>What this may look like: As most homeworkers are not employees, they do not receive sick/holiday/maternity pay and are rarely included in pension schemes. The supply of work is often irregular; regular work is one of homeworkers' top priorities.</p> <p>Likelihood of breach: High</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support and contribute to initiatives to provide social security to homeworkers who do not have access to, or are not covered by, any state system (eg funds/schemes for insurance, pension, child/health care, etc). Endeavour to provide regular work, and ensure purchasing practices support this aim (eg through better projections, reasonable deadlines and phased ordering). Provide advance information about prospects for orders, where known.
<p>ETI Base Code 9: No harsh or inhumane treatment is allowed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical abuse or discipline, the threat of physical abuse, sexual or other harassment and verbal abuse or other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited. This includes any form of coercion related to work at the household level. 	<p>What this may look like: Common in informal sweatshops but not among homeworkers.</p> <p>Likelihood of breach: Low</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage suppliers to recognise trade unions and consult with them over workplace procedures, to reduce the incidence of mistreatment and ensure it is reported and acted on appropriately. Work with suppliers, NGOs and trade unions to develop a confidential complaints system.
<p>ETI Principles of Implementation 4.3 and 3.3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeworkers covered by the Code should be able to report confidentially, without detriment, any failure to observe the Code. Workers whose work is covered by the Code are, where possible, made aware of the Code and implementation principles or procedures. This includes making homeworkers aware of the homeworker guidelines and their entitlements under the guidelines. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Make suppliers/contractors aware of the Code and the homeworker guidelines and how to implement them, and ensure they do so. Take practical measure to overcome any challenges in communicating the Code where language and literacy levels may be an issue. Work with suppliers, NGOs and trade unions to develop a confidential complaints system.

4.2 Work with your suppliers

Your suppliers are key to improving conditions for homeworkers. You can provide a range of advice, tools and support to help maximise the impact of their actions.

Suppliers are key to improving conditions for homeworkers. You should have engaged your suppliers from the start, for example when mapping homeworkers in your supply chain, and they need to be closely involved in any actions you decide to take.

4.2.1 Raise awareness

Start by raising suppliers' awareness of your company homeworker policy, national laws and codes of labour practice on homeworking, and the need to put those into practice. Tell them about the requirements of the ETI Base Code, and explain what that means in the context of homeworking. Give them a copy of the *ETI Homeworker Guidelines: What suppliers can do*. You may want to do this individually or organise awareness-raising training for several suppliers. Address the issue of homework at the start of any new relationship with agents or suppliers.

4.2.2 Consult on priorities

Consult with suppliers about priorities for implementing the Base Code with homeworkers (see Table 2 for suggestions of actions retailers can take). This will need to be informed by consultation about homeworkers' own priorities, which should be carried out as part of your initial mapping phase and with the help of other stakeholders – see Sections 3.4 and 4.4.

4.2.3 Develop a workplan

Plan a phased approach to addressing the priority issues and set this out in a workplan. The workplan should indicate:

- areas of responsibility;
- any advice and support agents/suppliers/contractors will need;
- how you will establish and maintain good working conditions down the supply chain; and
- a realistic timetable for working jointly on issues.

Although some areas may be easy to improve with little cost, others will take time, sensitivity and support to achieve. Reassure suppliers that you understand this and allow realistic timeframes for improvements. Start with actions that are easy to implement and not too threatening to contractors and subcontractors, such as carrying out health and safety training. More challenging areas, such as addressing wages, will then be easier to tackle as trust develops between you and your supplier, and further down the chain.

4.2.4 Build your suppliers' capacity to implement actions

Provide your suppliers with the understanding, tools and support they need to implement actions. For example:

- Encourage them to **use the homeworker guidelines for suppliers**, and to communicate your policy and the guidelines to homeworkers who work directly or indirectly for them.
- Advise suppliers if **health and safety** and other standards are inadequate and offer suggestions on best practice where possible.
- Help suppliers **develop and maintain records** and paper trails to demonstrate systems they have to ensure good conditions for homeworkers (eg provide them with examples of record keeping on piece rates, wages, training, union activity, etc). **Annex E** provides an example of a log book that homeworkers could use.
- Encourage suppliers to provide contractors and homeworkers with **opportunities to feed back** their concerns/issues to the supplier (eg on order times or product quality).
- Encourage suppliers to **recognise trade unions** and the right to collectively bargain. Trade unions can enable fair representation of homeworkers, and recognising a union can be the best way of enabling workers themselves to implement a homeworker policy and quickly and fairly resolve any problems that may arise.
- Negotiate **product costs** with your suppliers that cover piece rates equal to or higher than the minimum wage for homeworkers.
- **Build up trust** and make longer-term commitments to suppliers, so they have more incentive, resources and support to tackle homeworker issues. Provide them with information that will help them plan, such as prospects for orders, where known.

4.2.5 Work together on key labour issues

Work with your suppliers on specific issues where you have experience, expertise and/or you can help implement solutions that suppliers may not achieve on their own. For example, you could help develop/provide:

- Health and safety training appropriate to the sector and tasks being carried out.
- Best practice systems for setting fair piece rates down the supply chain and communicating those down the supply chain to homeworkers (see www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/homeworkers-project/guidelines for more information).
- Confidential complaint mechanisms.
- Systems to record activities such as union representation/meetings.
- Ways of rewarding homeworker families that send children to school.

4.2.6 Collect information

Ask your suppliers for information and evidence on how they are addressing key issues such as piece rate setting and wages, provision of health and safety training and equipment, communication with homeworkers, etc.

4.3 Take action in your own company

Make sure that your suppliers' attempts to address homeworkers' conditions aren't being undermined by your own company practices and behaviour of your colleagues.

You will need to match your suppliers' commitment to improving the working conditions of homeworkers if homeworkers are to benefit. The main actions that you can take within your company to help improve homeworkers conditions are to review and revise your purchasing practices, and to raise awareness and build capacity among colleagues. Without these, suppliers can only have limited impact – particularly where the gap between homeworkers' conditions and the ETI Base Code is so great that suppliers are not able to absorb the cost of necessary improvements.

4.3.1 Review your pricing and ordering procedures

You will need to review and revise your purchasing practices so that they don't undermine conditions for homeworkers. In particular, you should consider the following:

- **Supplier selection and other decisions by commercial staff:** Incorporate consideration of labour standards into your purchasing practices, and give ethical performance of suppliers/labour standards a greater weighting in sourcing decisions. Communicate with your buying departments about what this means in practice (see Section 4.3.2).
- **Commitment to suppliers:** Aim to make a commitment to your suppliers over a reasonable length of time. Direct orders towards suppliers who meet/are seeking to meet codes of labour practice (for example, continue trading with suppliers who breach codes provided they agree to make improvements over a reasonable period).
- **Product costs:** Negotiate product costs with suppliers that take account of the costs of observing the Base Code. The piece rates received by homeworkers should be equal to or higher than the minimum wage for homeworkers. This will mean allowing additional margins for supply chain intermediaries.
- **Piece-rate setting:** Develop standardised systems for setting piece rates and deductions (where applicable) so that they provide homeworkers with the minimum wage or higher (www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/homeworkers-project/guidelines) for further information on setting piece rates. Homeworkers should be clear about piece-rate payments; ensure that suppliers record how this is being done.
- **Payment times:** Identify reasons for delay in payments to homeworkers and take remedial measures. Develop practices to ensure prompt payment throughout your supply chain.
- **Lead times and deadlines.** Buyers should give reasonable deadlines for orders, so that homeworkers do not have to work excessive hours.
- **Regularity of orders:** Identify how your purchasing practices can help support the aim of providing regular work, for example through better projections, reasonable deadlines and phased ordering. Provide advance information about prospects for orders where known.

Further information: For more information on purchasing practices and their effects on labour standards, see www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/homeworkers-project/guidelines.

4.3.2 Raise awareness and build capacity within your company

You should start raising awareness of colleagues as soon as you begin looking at homeworker issues. Information on your company's approach to homeworking and how to put this into practice should be incorporated into existing company training and/or induction procedures for relevant staff. In particular, you should:

- Ensure that buying and sourcing teams understand the vulnerability of homeworkers, and how this should be taken into consideration when pricing and forecasting.
- Make buying teams aware of how their buying decisions, especially related to price and lead times, can affect homeworkers' conditions (see www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/homeworkers-project/guidelines to info on purchasing practices).
- Carry out training for purchasing teams on how to negotiate prices where homeworkers are involved, and how to ensure that the minimum wage for homeworkers is met.
- Emphasise the need to build strong and trustworthy relationships with suppliers, as these are key to increasing transparency along supply chains and ensuring your policy is put into practice.
- Encourage close coordination between buyers and compliance teams.
- Inform other staff, including quality assurance and product safety compliance staff, about the homeworker policy and your approach to homeworking.

4.4 Work with other stakeholders

Collaborate with others to make progress in situations where there is limited opportunity to improve homeworkers' conditions on your own.

There are situations where it can be particularly difficult to improve homeworkers' conditions on your own – for example, where access to individual homeworkers is limited due to social, cultural or other reasons, or supply chains are longer, less transparent and liable to volatility. In these cases, consider taking working with other companies or non-commercial actors which are active in labour rights implementation (eg government agencies, trade unions and non-governmental organisations). Collaborating with others will help make improvements at the community or industry-wide level, rather than improvements with a particular group of homeworkers in a suppliers' chain.

Where you have identified a need for collaborative action, you should:

- Identify stakeholders such as other retailers (with common sourcing locations, common processes, common interests), voluntary organisations, community or other local groups, trade unions, government agencies (see **Annex B** for examples of possible stakeholders, and consult homeworker organisations about local partners you and your suppliers can work with).
- Initiate a working group to discuss the guidelines and how to put them into practice, or join such a group where it already exists.
- Develop an action plan based on Table 2 and these guidelines.

Examples of collaborative actions that could be taken:

- Carrying out research into the conditions of homeworkers in the sector, and consulting with homeworkers about their needs and priorities regarding working conditions.
- Researching industry-specific potential hazards, and establishing safe working procedures for homeworkers.
- Developing or participating in policies and programmes to increase access to formal, quality education by homeworkers' children, at the closest point.
- Setting up mechanisms for addressing grievances.
- Supporting and contributing to initiatives to provide social security to homeworkers who do not have access to, or are not covered by, any state system (eg funds/schemes for insurance, pension, child/health care, etc).
- Collectively encouraging suppliers and contractors to ensure homeworkers' piece rates are equivalent to the local minimum wage.
- Developing systems to monitor payment levels and supplier/contractor practices.

Further information: Further examples of collaborative approaches to improving homeworkers' conditions can be found on www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/homeworkers-project/guidelines.

5 Monitoring progress

Setting up a review system will not only help you assess progress towards your goal of implementing international labour standards with homeworkers, but will help you improve the way you develop and target actions to improve homeworkers' conditions.

You will not be able to assess your progress in implementing the homeworker guidelines unless you set up a system of internal review. A review system should provide evidence of which actions have been carried out, as well as helping identify which actions are not having the anticipated impact and might need refining.

Monitoring should be an ongoing process. The approach you take will depend on the issue you are monitoring and the stage you are at in the process. For example, a review system might involve asking a list of questions such as:

- Have you distributed the *Homeworker Guidelines: What suppliers can do* to all suppliers likely to have homeworkers in their chain?
- Does your company have a policy on ensuring good working conditions for homeworkers, and has this been distributed to suppliers?
- What help (resources, expertise, advice) do your suppliers need, and has this been provided?
- Are relevant staff (including buyers) aware of your company's approach to homeworkers, and the business reasons for this (including public relations implications)?
- Have buyers been informed about the situation facing homeworkers and suppliers, and the potential impact of their decisions on labour conditions? Are they aware of the price implications of sourcing from suppliers who are committed to improving homeworkers' working conditions?

Annexes

- Annex A:** Model policy on homeworking – for use by retailers and suppliers
- Annex B:** Sources of information on homeworker involvement and conditions
- Annex C:** Sample questionnaire for sending to suppliers
- Annex D:** Questions for homeworkers in developed economies
- Annex E:** Log book for use by homeworkers

Annex A: Model policy on homeworking – for use by retailers and suppliers

1 Background

Company X is a member of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)* and is committed to improving working standards in its supply chains through the application of international labour standards. This includes a commitment to improving standards in those parts of the supply chain which are the most difficult to reach.

Historically, the lack of visibility of homeworkers in supply chains, combined with their complicated employment status in many countries, has made them a vulnerable group of workers. Many homeworkers have been underpaid and unsafe. We believe that one of the first steps towards reducing the vulnerability of these workers is to take an open and positive position towards homeworking. By reacting negatively to instances of homeworkers in our supply chain, there is a danger of:

- sending homeworkers underground and thus preventing any progress on improving their labour conditions; and/or
- triggering unintended consequences whereby workers could have their sole means of income removed.

2 Our position

2.1 Acceptance of homeworking

Company X believes that homeworking can be critical to its supply chain and openly accepts the presence of homework within these. Homeworkers can often provide us with the flexibility to cope with rapidly changing volumes of production. Homeworkers may also produce specialist components which cannot be made by machinery or small quantities of intricate or high-quality items.

From the perspective of homeworkers, the option to work from home can offer a degree of flexibility not met by traditional site-based work. Homeworkers frequently cite the advantages off-site working offers in enabling paid work to be balanced with domestic and family responsibilities.

2.2 Commitment to improving homeworkers' conditions

Concurrently, however, we also acknowledge that labour conditions enjoyed by homeworkers may not meet those set out in international labour standards/the ETI Base Code*. We are therefore committed to taking action, together with our suppliers, to improving these conditions. The first step in such action, we believe, is to make our position on homeworking clear.

3 Defining 'homework'

Our definition of homework is based upon the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition (1996, C177, Article 1) which states:

- (a) the term homework means work carried out by a person, to be referred to as a homemaker,
 - (1) in his or her home or in other premises of his or her choice, other than the workplace of the employer;
 - (2) for remuneration;

*Delete if not applicable.

- (3) which results in a product or service as specified by the employer, irrespective of who provides the equipment, materials or other inputs used, unless this person has the degree of autonomy and of economic independence necessary to be considered an independent worker under national laws, regulations or court decisions;
- (b) persons with employee status do not become homeworkers within the meaning of this Convention simply by occasionally performing their work as employees at home, rather than at their usual workplaces;
- (c) the term employer means a person, natural or legal, who, either directly or through an intermediary, whether or not intermediaries are provided for in national legislation, gives out home work in pursuance of his or her business activity.

4 Our commitment under this policy

We acknowledge that improving labour conditions for homeworkers is a complex issue. Under this homemaker policy we commit:

- to communicate our position on homeworking throughout our company, to those who supply to us, and those we supply to;
- to ensure that the presence of homeworkers in the supply chain will not lead to the relocation of work or cancellation of orders; and
- to work with our suppliers for the sustainable improvement of labour conditions with homeworkers in our supply chains. We will aim to do this by following the guidance set out in the ETI homemaker guidelines.

5 Our suppliers' commitments under this policy

We expect those we are sourcing from to:

- adopt a shared policy of acceptance of homeworking and commitment to improving homeworkers' labour conditions where these do not meet those set out in international labour standards/the ETI Base Code;
- communicate this policy to all those in the supply chain below them, including homeworkers themselves;
- work with us to identify where homeworking occurs in the supply chains beneath them; and
- work with us to develop an action plan for improving labour conditions with homeworkers where these are found to be below those set out in international labour standards/the ETI Base Code.

6 Labour standards

The provisions, in summary, of the ETI Base Code, are:

1. Employment is freely chosen
2. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are respected
3. Working conditions are safe and hygienic
4. Child labour shall not be used
5. Living wages are paid
6. Working hours are not excessive
7. No discrimination is practised
8. Regular employment is provided
9. No harsh or inhumane treatment is allowed

These provisions are founded on key ILO conventions, including **ILO Convention 177 on Home Work** which promotes the equality of treatment between homeworkers and other wage earners.

Annex B: Sources of information on homeworker involvement and conditions

Organisations addressing homeworkers and homeworking

A number of trade unions, NGOs and other organisations can help identify potential homeworker involvement in supply chains. Particular information sources in the not-for-profit sector include:

- **National trade union federations** in their respective countries can provide information or contacts. Gender/Women's Officers may be a good point of contact, since homeworkers are often women.
- **Homeworkers Worldwide:** The UK centre for the international movement of trade unions, NGOs and homeworkers' organisations and others supporting work with home-based workers (www.homeworkersww.org.uk).
- **HomeNet South Asia:** Regional network of homeworker organisations and supporters covering Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan, can provide links to homeworker organisations and other relevant contacts in these countries (www.homenetsouthasia.org).
- **HomeNet South East Asia:** Regional network of national homebased workers' networks in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines (www.homenetseasia.org).
- **National homeworking groups:** For example, those in HomeNet South Asia and HomeNet South East Asia. The National Group on Homeworking (NGH) – a UK NGO and membership organisation of homeworkers and supporter members – is no longer operating, although its website still contains some useful information and resources (www.ngh.org.uk).
- **Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA):** A trade union organisation of poor, self-employed women workers, who earn a living through their own labour or small businesses (www.sewa.org).
- **Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO):** A global research-policy network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy (www.wiego.org).

Publications on homeworkers and their working conditions

- **Acona (2002)** *Review of current knowledge and experience of applying corporate codes of practice with homeworkers*. ETI Report.
- **Bajaj, Mahjul (2000)** *Invisible workers, visible contributions: a study of home-based women workers in five sectors across South Asia*. Background Paper for South Asia Regional Policy Workshop on Home-based Work, London, Women in Informal Employment Globalising and Organising (WIEGO).
- **Felstead, A and Jewson, N (2000)** *In work, at home*. London, Routledge.
- **Gupta, Neelam (2001)** *Invisible labour: social security for home-based workers of the garment, agarbatti and papad industries*. Delhi, SEWA Bharat.
- **HomeNet (1999)** *New ways of organising: four case studies of trade union activity*. Study Pack.
- **HomeNet (2001)** Newsletter No 17.
- **HomeNet (2002)** *HomeNet vertical mapping pack: Tracing subcontracting and marketing chains to support homebased worker organising*, produced by HWW on behalf of HomeNet.
- **HomeNet (2003)** 'Organising for rights'. Newsletter No 19, Spring 2003.
- **Homeworkers Code of Practice Committee (2001)** *Changing fashion: the story of the No Sweatshop label*. www.nosweatshoplabel.com/downloads/NoSweatReport.pdf
- **ILO (1996)** *Convention on home work*. No 177. Geneva, ILO.
- **Kanawaty, G (1992)** *Introduction to work study*. Fourth (revised) edition. Geneva, ILO.
- **Trades Union Congress (2004)** *Organising homeworkers in the UK: learning from international experience*. London, TUC.
- **Unni, Jeemol and Rani, Uma (2005)** *Impact of recent policies on home-based work in India*. UNDP HRDC Discussion Paper Series 10, UNDP.

Other resources

The following resources have been developed by Homeworkers Worldwide (HWW):

Training manual (*We work at home*). Drawing on HWW's mapping programme in three continents, the manual provides ideas and exercises for organisers to start working with homebased workers. Available in paper form (£25 + P&P) or on CD (£10 + P&P).

Photo pack. A set of 20 A4 colour photos (laminated) of homebased workers, with explanatory text (who they are, where they are from, etc) for use in early stages of working with homebased workers (£30 + P&P).

Film (*Homework in China*). A film showcasing the different kinds of homework found in China in the course of HWW's mapping programme. Available on video or DVD (£5 + P&P).

Contact info@homeworkersww.org.uk or telephone +44 (0)113 217 4037.

'Model' completed questionnaire

Information sought from each supplier

1. Name of supplier:
2. Are any of your production processes subcontracted to homeworkers? Yes No
3. If yes, please list the production process and the details in the table below.

Production process	Contractor name	Subcontractor name	Sub-sub contractor name	Homeworkers' location (village/town)	Approx number of homeworkers in location
Embroidery	Mansingh Traders			Seelumpur Delhi	40
	Mansingh Traders	Chand Company		Ber Sarai Meerut	200
Beading	Suliaman Enterprises	Prem Company	Abdul Traders	Harharpur Bareilly	150
	Suliaman Enterprises	Rehman Brothers		Jonpur Bareilly	250
	Kumar & Sons			Buddh Vihar, Delhi	50
		Rehman Brothers		Jonpur Bareilly	250
		Abdul Traders		Harharpur Bareilly	150

If more subcontractors are used to contract out a particular production process to homeworkers, please feel free to add more columns to the above table.

Thank you

Annex D: Questions for homeworkers in developed economies

This questionnaire could be used to gather information from homeworkers about their conditions of employment. It was designed by a UK non-governmental organisation (NGO) for use with homeworkers in a developed economy where there might be more formal homeworker systems and where workers' awareness of conditions and rights may be greater. The questions can be used with groups of homeworkers or in one-to-one interviews. (See www.ethicaltrade.org/in-action/projects/homeworkers-project/guidelines for an example of a questionnaire that could be used for homeworkers in developing economies.)

Questions	Prompts	Information given
How did you hear about the job?		
What information were you given when you started working?	Induction • contract • terms of engagement • company policies • complaints procedure	
Where do you get information about your rights?	Personnel officer • unions • information pack	
How do you raise an issue bothering you?	Complaints procedure • union/works	
Have you heard of any homeworkers who have complained to the company? What happened to them as a result?	Did they get any further work?	
Are you consulted/informed about decisions which affect you? How well does this work?		
What does your job involve?	Include delivery, collection, task	
Are you provided with the tools you need for the job? Who pays for them?	For example: scissors, paper	
What training do you receive?	Examples, concerns?	
How is your rate of pay established?		
How do you find the pay rate, is it fair?	Comparison with other employers? Cost of living?	
Always paid on time?	Paid in full?	
Is the work regular? How many hours a week?		
How do you find out when work is coming?	Advance warning?	
How often do you receive work?		
Do you get any payments other than for the product?	Holiday/sick pay. Easy to claim?	
What paperwork do you receive?	Pay slips • delivery notes • collection note	
How do you get to know other homeworkers?	Social events	
Any cases of alleged harassment or bullying?	Examples? How managed?	
How does working here compare with other places?	Recommend to others?	
Do you feel part of the company?		
What are the good things and what are the bad things about homeworking?		
What would you improve if you could?		
Any changes coming up?	Production • employment?	
Any questions for us?		



Ethical Trading Initiative
Respect for workers worldwide

The Ethical Trading Initiative is a groundbreaking alliance of companies, trade unions and voluntary organisations. We work in partnership to improve the working lives of people across the globe who make or grow consumer goods – everything from tea to T-shirts, from flowers to footballs.

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