

Engaging with stakeholders in India

Each supply chain and sourcing country is likely to have different dynamics with different stakeholders that should be considered as a priority for engagement. This is no different in India. This document provides further guidance to companies on how specific stakeholders should be engaged along with when to engage them if conducting due diligence on Indian supply chains.

Identifying stakeholders for engagement

The process of identifying stakeholders, especially external stakeholders in sourcing countries such as India, can be challenging. Before you engage with stakeholders you should get an overview on salient issues regarding human rights and environmental issues. You could read JETO Country briefs, or at minimum [ITUC Global rights index](#).

It is important to speak with colleagues internally who have relevant experience of working with suppliers in sourcing countries, or whose job may involve communications with external stakeholders in the buyer's country. It will be important to get their input on who stakeholders are and whether they are likely to constructively engage with the company.

Speak with JETI to get their expert view on relevant NGOs, trade unions, or multi-stakeholder initiatives that are relevant to the company and which may be open to engagement. As the CSO and NGO landscape in both India shifts quickly, JETI contacts will be able to provide more up to date information on relevant stakeholders. Where the company already has an existing working relationship with an NGO or a trade union based in their home country, consider using them as a resource to help find stakeholders in India.

Alternatively, internet searches can provide useful information on relevant stakeholders. In India the [NGO-DARPAN](#) has a website which includes an NGO directory that is organised by state, and sector.

For an overview of stakeholder engagement, please see "Engaging stakeholders in due diligence: A beginner's roadmap for small and medium sized companies (SME's)". and "How to engage with stakeholders".

Key stakeholder groups in India

The lists of stakeholder groups are not necessarily exhaustive and instead are intended to bring focus to company engagements.

Stakeholder	Considerations	Relevant due diligence stage				
		1	2	3	4&5	6
Regional consultation platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish or participate in regional meetings in India with national union federations and state-level independent or affiliated trade unions, along with NGOs, and peer companies. Expert impartial third parties may be useful as facilitators of the regional meetings. Ensure these groups are tailored to the needs and capacities of SME buyers. For example, consider dividing responsibilities in stakeholder engagement among participating SMEs. 		x	x	x	x
Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directly engage with supplier. Seek to involve in regional consultation platforms to share challenges, learnings and good practices As far as possible, have regular face to face meetings with suppliers with clear goals and objectives of each visit Provide suppliers with opportunities to ask questions about requirements and provide technical support on implementation if the supplier lacks capacity Ensure that communication on human rights and environment is communicated consistently through all interactions with the supplier to embed importance of the issue Understand supplier constraints and concerns in implementing company requirements 		x	x	x	x
Local NGOs and CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify appropriate local NGOs via JETI or through NGOs in the buyer's country that have appropriate expertise Seek engagement as part of regional consultation platforms Clearly state the objectives of the company's engagement, and ensure they understand the scope of the company's due diligence Where deemed appropriate, consider engaging with a local NGO to provide monitoring support of particular high-risk sites See Annex 3 for a checklist of questions to use 		x	x	x	x
Local trade unions and workers' organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to engage with and involve in regional consultation platforms 		x	x	x	x
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where companies are hoping to engage with local government, consider local labour departments, ESI/EPFO Boards etc. This could be done jointly with other companies through regional consultation platforms. Be clear that the aim is to improve supplier compliance with national law Seek to understand the capacity of local authorities to effectively manage environmental and human rights issues (numbers and skills of inspectors etc.) Seek to understand how these issues are investigated and remediated, if at all Seek to understand how the company can best contribute to local efforts to address these issues 			x	x	x

Protocol for engaging with local CSOs and NGOs in India

For a company directly engaging with a local CSO or NGO in India, the table below provides an overview of an approach to engaging and questions to consider asking. This may be useful where there are no existing regional consultation platforms in place, or to guide discussions organised through a platform. Note: The questions below are to be used as guidance and companies should make necessary amendments as per their circumstances.

Questions
Background
Can you explain your organisation’s mandate and goals in relation to [human rights / environmental issues]?
What projects are you currently engaged in to address [human rights / environmental issues]?
How does your organisation engage with other stakeholders to address [human rights / environmental issues]? Trade unions? Suppliers? Local authorities? etc
Risk identification and assessment
Can you describe the primary [human rights / environmental issues] in the manufacturing sector in this area?
Which groups of people are most adversely affected by these issues?
Are there particular production processes which result in increased risks?
What do you consider to be the primary drivers of the risks that you have described?
Remediation
Can you explain how [human rights / environmental impacts] arising from supplier activities would be remediated at the moment? What role can trade unions play?
How effective are these? Why?
What support can you / others provide to people that have been affected by these negative impacts?
What additional support can companies that source from these supplier provide to make remedy more effective?
Track and communicate
What are the primary indicators to look out for on a supplier worksite to help identify [human rights / environmental issues]?
What existing initiatives and programmes are in place which can help us better understand the impacts of our efforts to address [human rights / environmental issues]?
What are the most effective approaches to engaging with and hearing from affected peoples?
Next steps [ask and amend as per the responses received so far]
Which other stakeholders are important to speak to about these issues in this region?
Who would you consider to be the best organisation to partner with to effectively remediate and monitor the issues you have described? Is this something you would be interested in collaborating on?