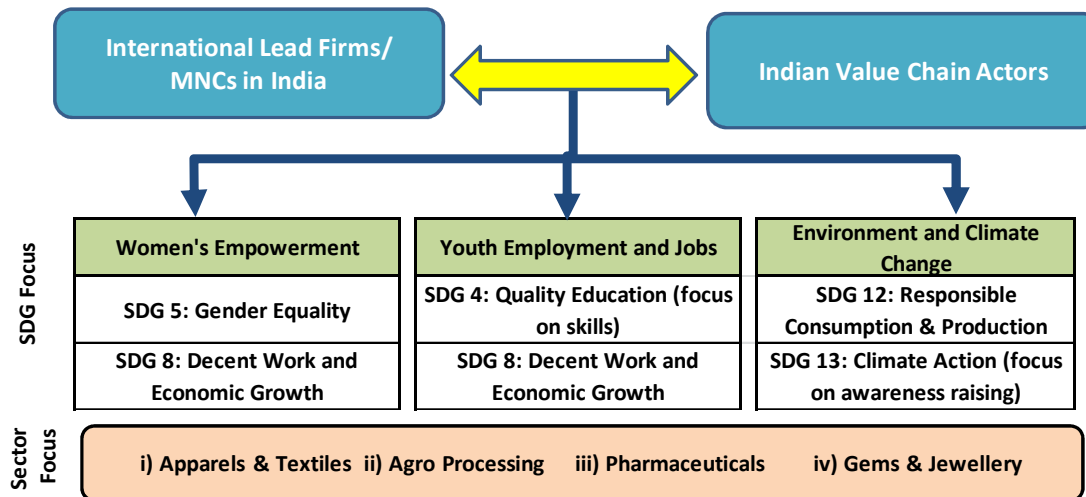


## MNC Strategies & Behaviours in Global Value Chains to promote SDGs: a North-South Dialogue<sup>1</sup>

9<sup>th</sup> October 2019, International Trade Centre (ITC), Geneva (Switzerland)

### 1. Background

Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) and Aston India Centre for Applied Research (AICAR), Aston University, UK are implementing a project to explore and investigate *how private sector companies - as part of GVCs, production networks and FDI in India have/could better contribute towards achievement of specific SDGs, particularly inclusive education and life-long learning (SDG4), employment and decent work for the youth (SDG 8), women’s social and economic empowerment (SDG 5), sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12), and Climate Action (SDG 13).* This project referred to as the PROGRESS project is being supported by International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada.



**Figure 1: A diagrammatic representation of GVC interactions and potential impacts on relevant SDGs**

The project facilitates policy and practice (industry) level discussions in India leading to specific actions in **four key sectors viz. i) Apparels & Textiles, ii) Agro-Processing, iii) Pharmaceuticals, and iv) Gems & Jewellery**. Evidence is being gathered from existing policies/practices in these sectors and through stakeholder interactions to understand the nature of engagement of MNCs with suppliers/manufacturers/producers in India to achieve specific SDGs – and highlight opportunities and challenges.

Further, the experience of the project would also be used to engage with international actors/organisations to highlight contributions through this GVC approach on SDGs, particularly in an emerging economy like India. It will also highlight areas that need attention. It would thereby highlight

<sup>1</sup>This event is being held under the auspices of the project entitled, “Promoting Responsible Value Chains in India for an Effective Contribution of the Private Sector to SDGs” (PROGRESS Project) being implemented by Centre for Responsible Business (CRB), India in partnership with Aston India Centre for Applied Research (AICAR), U.K.

and demonstrate methodologies for achieving sustainable and inclusive GVCs aimed at benefiting the youth, women and local environment in an emerging economy.

## 2. International Interface Meeting

### 2.1. Rationale

As mentioned above, the project aims to examine the interactions between brands/lead firms and their value chain actors in India to gather evidence on sustainability impacts (specific Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs) on the ground. This analysis would throw light on opportunities and challenges in pursuing SDGs through a global value chain approach in an emerging economy like India.

Needless to say in addition to **MNCs/lead firms/International brands, international policy actors, international business chambers, academia, civil society and various international organisations** are key stakeholders in this dialogue. It is expected that the project would be enriched by inputs from international stakeholders, to better understand:

- Vision and drivers in adopting sustainability (specific SDGs) among MNCs/lead firms
- Approaches in pursuing sustainability/SDGs through value chains by MNCs/lead firms (and their efficacy)
- Nature of support extended by MNCs/lead firms to value chain actors in emerging economies (like India) to adopt sustainability/SDGs
- Prevailing methods for sustainability measurement in value chain and modes of communication to stakeholders
- Mechanisms (if any) for value chain actors (from the suppliers' side) to provide inputs to shape/inform sustainability/SDG initiatives of MNCs/lead firm

CRB and the project partners are keen to start this dialogue with international stakeholders and organisations through a series of (annual) international interface meetings. The first one is planned on 9 October in Geneva, Switzerland – being hosted by and at the International Trade Centre (***International Trade Centre (ITC) 54-56 rue de Montbrillant, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland***)

### 2.2. Date and Location

The first International Interface Meeting (IIM) of the PROGRESS Project has been planned for **9<sup>th</sup> October 2019**. This meeting will be convened in collaboration with the **International Trade Centre, Geneva**.

The meeting will be organised back to back with ITC's annual Trade for Sustainable Development (T4SD<sup>2</sup>) Forum (7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> October) to be held in Geneva over the course of WTO's Public Forum (8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> October in Geneva). The target audience of the IIM is a mix of international brands, academia, international organisations, international civil society, thematic experts (gender, youth engagement and sustainable production and consumption) and policy makers. This is an open event for all interested participants/organisations who plan to be in Geneva in the afternoon on 9<sup>th</sup> October.

Please confirm your presence to [devyani@c4rb.in](mailto:devyani@c4rb.in) as we need to make arrangement for a light lunch for all participants at the venue.

---

<sup>2</sup>This year, the **T4SD Forum** will reflect the new realities of international trade and focus on sustainability mainstreaming. The three-day event will look at sustainability mainstreaming from every angle: from its policy implications to its implementation on the ground, from its environmental dimension to its social dimension, from SMEs to large corporations.

### 2.3.Meeting Objectives

- Introduce the need/purpose/activities/outcomes of the project and introduction to project partners
- Understand the nature of engagement/interaction between MNCs/lead firms and value chain actors in an emerging economy/production centre for promoting specific SDGs (along the parameters defined above),
- Identify opportunities with academia and international organisations to magnify outreach and envisioned impacts
- Identify relevant (international) stakeholders to be part of project related discussions and events

### 2.4.Draft Meeting Agenda

Timings	Program Details
12:00 – 13:00	<b>Registration &amp;Light Lunch</b>
13:00– 13:30	<b>Inaugural Session</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Welcome Address</b> Joseph Wozniak, Head, Trade for Sustainable Development (ITC)</li> <li>• <b>Opening Remarks</b> Bimal Arora, Assistant Professor in Management, CSR and Sustainability, Aston Business School, UK and Honorary Chairperson, CRB</li> <li>• <b>Special Remarks</b> Martha Melesse, Program Leader, Employment and Growth, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada</li> <li>• <b>Thematic Overview</b> Rijit Sengupta, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business (CRB)</li> </ul>
13:30– 14:55  (Panel discussions followed by Q&A)	<b>Panel Discussion on “Inclusive and Sustainable Global Value Chains: How do sustainability imperatives of buyer countries align to emerging economies’ realities”</b>  <b>Panel Moderator: Anders Aeroe, Director, Division of Enterprises and Institutions, ITC</b>  <b>Panel</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wael Issa, Senior Adviser, ILO (Coordinator, ILOs’ Plan of Action on Decent Work in Global Supply Chains)</li> <li>• Christine Svarer, Director, HER Project, BSR</li> <li>• Elisa Tonda, Head, Consumption and Production Unit, Economy Division, UNEP</li> <li>• Didier Bergeret, Director, Social Sustainability and SSCI, Consumer Goods Forum</li> <li>• Peter Nestor, Human Rights Due Diligence &amp; External Engagement Manager, Novartis</li> <li>• Purvi Shah, Senior Manager, Ethical Initiatives, De Beers</li> </ul>
14:55 – 15:50	Group work (40 mins) - Participants would be divided into 3-4 groups to discuss the following two topics  <b>Topic 1: Business Innovation in Global Value Chains</b> - The group will deliberate on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enablers needed for MNCs/ International brands to pursue business innovation (w.r.t. sustainability) in their value chains,</li> <li>• How are MNCs supporting sustainability innovations in their value chains;</li> </ul>

Timings	Program Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the challenges faced by MNCs to drive sustainability related business innovations through their value chains?</li> </ul> <p>Topic 2: <b>Measuring, Monitoring and Communicating Sustainability in GVCs.</b> The group will discuss and summarise on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing mechanisms for measurement and monitoring? And their efficiency</li> <li>• How can emerging market value chain actors influence and guide these mechanisms?</li> <li>• Need and means for communicating on sustainability? Who needs to know and how?</li> </ul> <p><b>Group Presentations &amp; Discussions (15 mins)</b></p>
15:50– 16:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concluding Remarks and Way Forward, CRB</li> <li>• Vote of Thanks, ITC</li> </ul>