Terms of Reference

Comprehensive Analysis of Better Work's Data

BACKGROUND

Better Work – a collaboration between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) – is a comprehensive programme bringing together all levels of the apparel industry to improve working conditions and boost the competitiveness of apparel businesses. To date, the programme has expanded its activities to eleven apparel-producing countries, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia, Jordan, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam, in addition to pilot interventions in Madagascar and Sri Lanka. It currently covers more than 2,000 apparel supplier factories and 3.4 million workers, of whom 69 per cent are women.

Beyond assessing enterprises' compliance with national labour laws and international labour standards, Better Work provides advisory services and training to support compliance improvements. Additionally, the programme collaborates with government agencies to strengthen labour regulations and works with multinational buyers to promote their commitment to sustainable compliance. The programme also works with unions and employers representatives to raise awareness among managers and workers about their rights and responsibilities in the workplace as well as to build their capacity to engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation.

Better Work recognizes that data and research are powerful drivers of change across the supply chain. Through its continuous engagement with factories, the programme generates a wealth of compliance insights that not only inform its own interventions at the factory, national, and global levels but also serve as a critical resource for other key actors. This information is regularly shared with other ILO units, constituents, buyers, and donors, to highlight compliance trends, areas of progress, and persistent challenges, while also identifying key factors affecting non-compliance. By making this data and insights accessible, the programme enables various supply chain actors to take informed action, aligning incentives and strengthening accountability.

OBJECTIVE

Within this context, Better Work is seeking to contract a research partner with a strong track record in corporate responsibility in supply chains, international trade and labour issues. The selected partner will be responsible for conducting a comprehensive econometric analysis of Better Work's global longitudinal assessment and operational data.

The analysis is expected to inform and advance several key workstreams across the programme's strategic agenda, including the implementation of its research strategy by generating a series of thematic and country-specific research briefs that contribute to our broader research and policy objectives. Specifically, the analysis aims to explore overall workplace compliance and factory performance trends, and to understand how different operational components of Better Work's factory engagement model influence these

compliance trends. The contracted partner will work closely with the programme to identify and refine the most promising research questions for analysis based on the data at hand, helping to narrow down and prioritize the hypotheses to be tested.

SCOPE OF WORK

The contracted service provider is expected to:

▶ Merge Better Work's global longitudinal assessment data with other relevant datasets.

▶ Engage with country programme staff and relevant stakeholders to gather key contextual insights that will help determine the most appropriate econometric models for panel data analysis.

▶ Conduct a comprehensive econometric analysis of the merged panel dataset, applying suitable econometric methods.

▶ Support the development of analytical outputs, including a final report with statistical tables and graphs, which will contribute to the development of select thematic/country briefs.

▶ Ensure secure data handling and confidentiality.

REQUIRED SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

The research collaborator is expected to have:

1. Advanced degree (Master's or PhD) in economics, econometrics, statistics, or a related quantitative field.
2. Proven experience (+ 5-7 years) conducting applied econometric analysis for research or policy projects, ideally in development, labor markets, or social policy.
3. Demonstrated proficiency in statistical software such as Stata, R, or Python.
4. Capacity to communicate findings clearly to technical and non-technical audiences, including through policy briefs and presentations.
5. Ability to maintain high standards of data confidentiality and research ethics.

TASKS AND DELIVERABLES

The expected timeline of the project is 15 July 2025 – 31 December 2025.

The following set of deliverables (with corresponding tentative timeline) are expected to guide the work of the contracted researcher:

Deliverables	Expected completion date
1. Cleaned and documented dataset.	1 October
2. Presentation of key findings to non-technical audience.	1 December

3. Technical report including research questions, methodology, and key findings.	15 December

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The contractor will be paid upon satisfactory completion of deliverables and upon receipt of signed invoices. A tentative payment schedule is provided below:

Condition	Payment
Upon successful completion of Deliverables 1	50% of the total contract value
Upon successful completion of Deliverables 2 & 3	50% of the total contract value

HOW TO APPLY

Interested candidates wishing to apply to this assignment must send an email to grabher-meyer@ilo.org, including:

- A technical proposal, with a proposed approach and methodology, a workplan proposal based on these TORs (inclusive of a schedule of activities), evidence of past relevant experiences, CV;
- A financial proposal, including daily rate (in USD) (the assignment is to be carried out remotely and no extra budget should be necessary).

The deadline for receiving applications is **26 June 2025**.

Only short-listed applicants will be contacted.

International Labour Organization

IFC International Finance Corporation WORLD BANK GROUP