Reusing IT's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Policy

1. Introduction

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) policy applies to Reusing IT (RUIT) and the range of initiatives that are supported by RUIT.

Reusing IT organises and deploys resources in accordance with its strategy. The strategy guides the selection of outcomes, the choice of TT partners and the allocation of financial and technical resources.

Reusing IT strives to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency in the use of its resources through monitoring and evaluation with the following overarching objectives:

a. To promote accountability for the achievement of Reusing IT mission through the assessment of results, processes and performance of partners involved in initiatives.

b. To promote learning and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned within Reusing IT, partners and the fashion industry. Lesson learning will form the basis for future strategic decision-making and resource deployment across Reusing IT signature programmes.

The following principles underpin our MEL policy:

a. Results orientation in all initiatives supported by Reusing IT.

b. Accountable and transparent use of RUIT resources for the delivery of results.

c. Simplicity and cost-effectiveness in criteria and minimum requirements for MEL.

d. Build capacity of partner organisations to improve their MEL.

e. Use and Utility driven evaluation – Reusing IT conducts evaluation based on a clear need for knowledge to document lessons and improve strategy, programming and decision-making.

f. The purpose of the policy is to align Reusing IT and partner expectations and actions on systematically measuring and managing for results. Reusing IT supports a diverse range of initiatives and partners hence it is necessary to have a common understanding of how MEL will be conducted. This includes roles and responsibilities of the partner and Reusing IT, so as to foster mutual accountability and learning
throughout the grant management cycle and organisation.

g. The policy and minimum requirements will be applied flexibly in relation to; context need and type of initiative, capacities of partners and based on the reviews by RUIT staff.

2. Monitoring

Definition: Monitoring is a continuing function that uses systematic collection of qualitative and quantitative data on specified indicators to provide management with information on a programmes activities, outputs and outcomes to track its performance. It is first and foremost a management instrument used at the initiative level and addresses the key question – "Are we doing things right and in the right way?"

Purpose and use of monitoring: Monitoring provides management and the key stakeholders of initiatives with regularised reporting on the extent of progress towards outcomes, taking account of internal and external assumptions and risks. Monitoring data is used during implementation to provide feedback into initiative management decision-making on activities both ongoing and planned, evaluation and learning.

MEL quality at entry: is concerned with ensuring that partners monitor progress towards initiative outputs and outcomes, and their contributions towards KPIs. Reusing IT will place emphasis on ensuring the quality-at-entry of MEL plans within the context of the overall review of initiative designs to meet the minimum requirements. Reusing IT will work proactively with partners to ensure that they can meet the minimum requirements.

3. Evaluation

Definition: Evaluation refers to the systematic process of determining the worth or significance of an initiative, strategy or policy. Evaluation typically assesses the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the initiatives supported by Reusing IT.

An evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, therefore permitting the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into decision-making processes. In doing so, evaluation answers the key questions – "Have we done the right things? What works and what doesn't and why? What have we learned?"

In line with the Reusing IT's goals and strategy, evaluation places specific emphasis on utility-driven evaluations that assess the scaling-up potential, sustainability of initiatives and partner organisations within the context of well-defined demand for evaluation.

Purpose and use of evaluation: Evaluation feeds into RUIT decision-making processes regarding the refinement and/or development of strategy; programming and reporting cycles against KPIs. Evaluation aims at improving organisational relevance and achievement of results, effectiveness and efficiency of resource utilisation for enhancement of positive impacts on beneficiaries. It should also identify good practices and as well as those to be avoided.

Types of evaluation: Reusing IT's approach to evaluation must be adapted to the initiative context and available resources. The main types of evaluation conducted Reusing IT and partners will include the following:

a. **Initiative evaluations** – of initiatives under implementation (e.g., formative – mid-term evaluations), and at the end of an initiative (e.g., summative – terminal evaluation) will be conducted by partners, if self-evaluations. Reusing IT will manage and / or oversee the evaluation if independent evaluation is needed.

b. **Programme/strategic evaluations** – of a signature programme (e.g., sustainable cotton, working conditions or forced and child labour) and long-term programmes with partners focusing on a specific set of initiatives. Reusing IT will initiate and manage these independent evaluations, with the participation of partners as necessary.

c. **Thematic evaluations** – of a selection of initiatives which address a similar area or issue, for example – policy advocacy, scaling-up, gender and women's

empowerment. Reusing IT will initiate and manage these evaluations with the participation of partners as necessary.

d. **Impact evaluation** – will be used to assess results of initiatives and will be integrated into design so that counterfactuals can be identified prior or at the beginning of implementation.

Impact evaluation is often resource intensive and will only be used where there is a clear knowledge gap and utility for evidence that can be used to decide whether or not to scale-up or replicate pilots or innovations. Evaluations address questions of causation and must be able to rule out effects of factors other than the specific initiative, through mixed-method designs that include counterfactual using theory-based, experimental or quasi-experimental designs.

Reusing IT is less interested in issues of attribution of causality to its own financial and technical resources, but of contribution those resources make with other partners to prove that an initiative can produce sustainable impacts on people's lives.

Therefore, impact evaluation will contribute with critical knowledge to Reusing IT and partners. Reusing IT will work with partners to identify suitable initiatives taking into account focus, size, and available resources for MEL, knowledge needs and key audiences, local context and methods.

e. **Developmental and real-time feedback / evaluation** – will be used to assess results and provide rapid and regular feedback for decision-making and learning to Reusing IT and partners for initiatives and programmes where pathways to success are not clear. This type of evaluation will be useful for impact investment, early stage innovation or social entrepreneurship where traditional forms of formative and summative evaluation are not suitable.

f. **Syntheses and Systematic Reviews** – of initiatives that do not require a field-based evaluation, but have sufficient documentary data to warrant assessment. The reviews will respond to specific knowledge gaps and questions that have the potential to improve the design and implementation of future RUIT initiatives or provide relevant information. The reviews will be initiated and managed by Reusing IT in collaboration with partners, where necessary.

g. **Organisational performance evaluation** – of organisational effectiveness and operating models of key partners. This type of evaluation will be used to assess the efficacy of core support initiatives, when:

- Significant amounts of financial and technical support are provided to a partner with shared goals and thus are essential to the success of Reusing IT's strategy.
- A partner's organisational development and ongoing relationship with Reusing IT requires additional knowledge to inform future collaboration.
- RUIT redefines or develops a new strategy or models of operation that require review of current long-term partner funding.

Evaluation quality assurance: Is concerned with ensuring that partners evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, and also contributions towards the success of Reusing IT's goals and KPIs. Within this context Reusing IT will place emphasis on ensuring that evaluation designs, resourcing, planning and execution are in-line with the minimum requirements.

Knowledge management, learning and communication: MEL contributes to building knowledge for organisational improvement and learning among partners and within Reusing IT. The main purposes of knowledge management of MEL information are to:

a. Actively promote a culture of learning and feedback within Reusing IT and partner organisations.

b. Promote the use of lessons learned to improve the design of and implementation of initiatives.

c. Contribute towards increased awareness and confidence in Reusing IT's work and leverage further support and partnerships.

Key findings and lessons will be collated and made accessible internally to programme managers; internally and externally through Reusing IT's annual reports, the website and other social media, as appropriate and necessary.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

RUIT management and staff: Commit to developing and improving MEL and the focus on utility-driven evaluation for learning and decision-making.

a. **RUIT Management** support the design and use of MEL as they:
- Request and use evaluation to inform decision-making at strategic and programmatic levels.
- Support the Impact Team at Reusing IT to ensure quality in the technical review of MEL and instill the results-orientation of the organisation and across initiatives.

b. **RUIT Programme Managers** promote high quality MEL in initiatives through:
- Support and consultations with partners to ensure overall initiative design is results-orientated.
- Use and promote existing evaluative evidence from inside and outside Reusing IT in their decision-making and dialogue with partners to enhance initiative design.
- Share findings transparently from evaluations to promote organisation learning and decision-making.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation Principles and Criteria

The work of Reusing IT and its relationships with partners in MEL is informed to some extent by internationally recognised good practices, principles, norms and standards developed for evaluation by the OECD DAC Evaluation Network and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).

No international principles have been formulated on monitoring, however it is common to formulate minimum requirements for monitoring systems, for example that initiatives shall have MEL plans and logical frameworks with indicators and targets *inter alia.* It is also established that initiative MEL plans need to be related to overall organisational efforts to manage for results and indicate their contribution towards goals and strategies.

Evaluation principles: Evaluation conducted by Reusing IT will be guided by the following internationally recognised principles:

a. **Credibility:** Evaluations shall be based on reliable and credible data and observations. Evaluations shall use established and appropriate methodological approaches to ensure credibility and validity of data collected.

b. **Utility:** Evaluations must respond clearly to demand and needs of Reusing IT and partners. Evaluations are not to be conducted for their own sake.

c. **Impartiality:** Evaluations must provide a comprehensive evidence-based overview of the strengths and weaknesses of initiatives, programmes, thematic area or organisation taking into account the views of stakeholders.

d. **Transparency:** Evaluations must be based on clear lines of communication concerning the purpose, scope, methodologies and use of findings. The evaluation reports should, unless containing sensitive information by made available to all relevant stakeholders.

e. **Disclosure:** Reusing IT will disseminate evaluation findings and lessons internally and externally via the website and appropriate social media.

f. **Ethical:** Evaluations shall provide due regard for the welfare, beliefs and customs of those involved or affected, avoiding conflict of interest. Evaluators must respect the right of individuals, institutions and companies to provide information in confidence.

g. **Participation:** Where appropriate and possible Reusing IT will pursue joint-evaluations with partners to gain insights and feedback that may not be gained through stand-alone evaluation approaches.

h. **Competencies and capacities:** Reusing IT and partners shall ensure that in commissioning evaluations, teams are composed of experienced and sufficiently senior evaluators, who adopt appropriate methodologies for assessment of results and performance.

Evaluation criteria: Evaluations shall in general report against the following internationally established criteria:

a. **Relevance:** the extent to which the initiative was suited to the priorities of the recipient or beneficiary group, partner and Reusing IT. The analyses should include an assessment of changes in the validity and relevance of the initiative over time.

b. **Effectiveness:** the extent to which initiative objective was achieved or likely to be achieved, including assessment of influencing factors for achievement and / or failure.

c. **Efficiency:** the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources available using efficient and timely processes.

d. **Results / Impact:** the extent the initiative has achieved positive or negative changes, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended on beneficiaries. For Reusing IT this will involve an assessment of socio-economic, environmental, scale-up and replication effects taking into external factors.

e. **Sustainability:** Reusing IT is particularly interested in financial, socio-economic and environmental sustainability of initiatives and partner organisations.

f. **Scalability:** the extent to wish the results achieved by the initiative have been (or have the potential for) able to effect wider systemic change

Monitoring Principles: Reusing IT and partners are guided by the following set of principles.

a. **Credibility:** Monitoring shall be based on valid and reliable data or observations quantitative and / or qualitative. Monitoring reports shall adhere to and reflect clearly structured data collection methods and analyses.

b. **Utility:** Monitoring must serve the information needs of the intended users at initiative level. Partners shall ensure that monitoring is relevant, timely, clearly presented, performance and results orientated.

c. **Impartiality:** Monitoring reports, self-evaluations and other partner produced review of initiative implementation performance must be free of bias.

d. **Transparency and Disclosure:** Openness and consultation with all major stakeholders involved in initiative monitoring is essential. At Reusing IT level KPI performance monitoring must be clearly communicated to internal and external stakeholders.

e. **Participation:** RUIT initiatives are undertaken through and with partners: Non-Governmental Organisations, private sector, communities and others.
Monitoring shall be carried out with the participation of relevant partners at the local level.

Monitoring Criteria: Partners will develop and execute monitoring plans and / or systems that are appropriate to the initiatives for measuring performance, outcomes and progress towards impact. In doing so, indicators shall adhere to SMART criteria:

a. **Specific:** Target a specific area for improvement and appropriately relate to the achievement of an objective

b. **Measurable:** The monitoring system and indicators are amenable to quantitative or qualitative measurement.

c. **Achievable and Attributable:** The monitoring system / plan identifies what changes are anticipated as a result of the initiative and whether the results are realistic. Attribution requires that indicators track changes in relation to the initiative.

d. **Relevant and Realistic:** The monitoring system selects performance indicators that are relevant to the objectives and are likely to be achievable within the period of initiative implementation.

e. **Time-bound:** The monitoring system allows progress to be tracked periodically and in a cost-effective manner.