



Cooperation On Fair, Free, Equitable Employment

# Guidance on Communication and Training Across the Supply Chain

TOOL 20 OF 28

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## About Our Funding

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# About the COFFEE Toolkit

This tool is one of 28 tools and 14 online training modules comprising the [COFFEE Toolkit](#), which was developed as part of Verité’s Cooperation on Fair, Free, Equitable Employment (COFFEE) Project through generous funding from the US Department of Labor’s Bureau of International Labor Affairs (USDOL-ILAB). The purpose of the COFFEE Toolkit is to promote coffee retailer, roaster, trader, cooperative, and farm adoption of socially sustainable sourcing and farming practices in order to promote improved working conditions for farmworkers in the coffee sector.

The COFFEE Toolkit was developed in alignment with USDOL’s [Comply Chain](#) model, with at least one tool created for each of the eight steps of Comply Chain (see graphic below). Many of the tools are derived from tools created for the [Responsible Sourcing Tool](#), developed by Verité with funding from the U.S. Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP). The tools can be used á la carte, but it is important that companies have systems and tools in place for each step of Comply Chain.



# Why Communicate and Train?

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Communication and training are critical components of a company's social responsibility program. These two methods of capability building are the focus of this tool and combined, they develop and support supply chain actors' ability to uphold a company's commitments and expectations. In this tool we refer to communication as the channels for disseminating information to all stakeholders to ensure that everyone, from coffee bean producer to coffee retailer, is aware of the company's commitments and expectations around social responsibility. Training, as described in this tool, supports the adoption and implementation of the company's standards and improves everyone's ability to comply with them.

## About This Tool

The **purpose** of this tool is to help companies better understand how to utilize communication channels and assess the appropriate approach to building the capabilities of their supply chain partners.

The main **audience** for this tool is coffee retailers, roasters, and traders seeking to communicate and train their suppliers on their standards and expectations.

# Communicating Company Expectations

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Drafting standards and expectations is not the end point. Effective implementation of your social sustainability requirements relies on the informed decisions and actions of individuals and companies throughout the supply chain, from the most senior-level executives at a major roaster, to a trader choosing which farm to purchase coffee from, to a worker filing a grievance. To ensure expectations are communicated, the company needs to develop a plan for disseminating all of its governance tools, such as: company codes of conduct, supplier codes of conduct, key policy changes, grievance channels and procedures, human rights statements/commitments, etc.

It's important to consider the most user-friendly and shareable format for each audience. For example, standards related to working hours should be clearly posted at the jobsite, in a place where all workers can see them and in languages they understand. Human rights commitments can be sent to all employers in the supply chain and also publicly available for download on the company website.





# Who should know what?

The information needed by each group of supply chain actors will vary, largely depending on whether they are the employers of farmworkers, such as smallholders and estates, or buyers of green coffee whose primary concern is due diligence in their own supply chains. Below is an overview of what each major coffee supply chains actor needs to know, as well as the types of information they are responsible for disseminating to lower tiers of the supply chain.

## All supply chain actors

All parties in a company's supply chain — from producers to end customers — need information about:

- The company's commitment to sustainability and its code of conduct standards
- How it manages its supply chain to ensure that human rights and other code commitments are respected at all levels
- The company's process for remediating identified labor and human rights violations
- How all supply chain actors, including workers, coffee producing communities, labor unions, and civil society organizations can provide input and feedback on the performance of the company and its supply chain partners

## Roasters and traders

This audience's primary need is to increase their knowledge and skills and those of their suppliers — processors, cooperatives, estates, farms, and the labor brokers — to adhere to code of conduct standards and legal requirements.

## Producers

Producers of all sizes that employ hired labor need practical advice on how to comply with customer codes of conduct. This helps the producer to understand "what good looks like" and how to get there in terms of its policies and procedures, such as how to determine permissible forms of work for the children of smallholder farmers. Producers also need to know how to accurately estimate the number of seasonal workers needed during the harvest, to ensure that do not hire too few workers, which can result in the imposition of production quotas and compulsory overtime for workers to ensure that all the coffee is harvested in time. They also need guidance on how to screen, select, and manage labor brokers to prevent unethical recruitment practices.

## Labor brokers

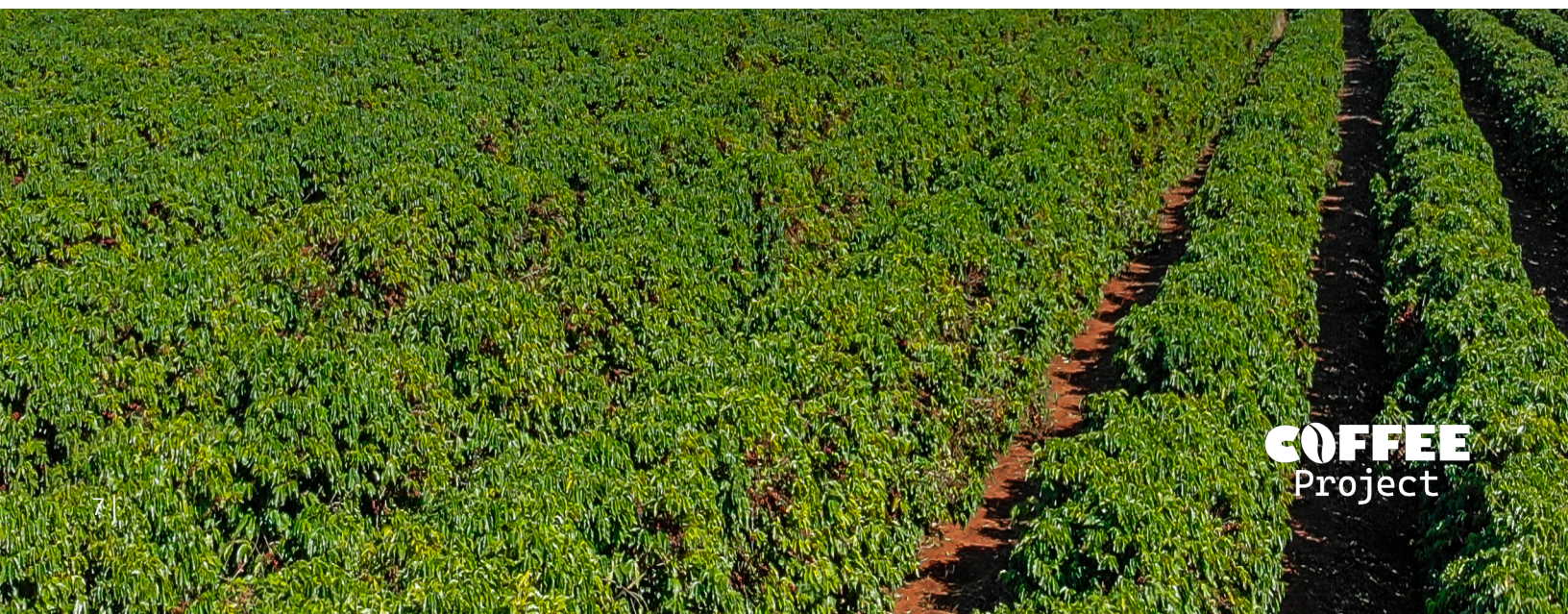
When employers use third parties to recruit, select, hire, manage, and/or transport workers, they lose control and visibility over the process, making workers more vulnerable to unethical recruitment practices, such as being charged recruitment and job placement fees, deception about the nature of the work, and other practices that violate their rights.

Labor brokers need to understand laws and code of conduct standards related to recruitment and hiring, and how to establish ethical recruitment policies and procedures to enable them to comply with these standards. They should also learn how to ensure that their agents, sub-agents partners, and business partners (worker housing providers, transportation companies, etc.) are also operating in compliance with code and legal requirements.

## Workers and communities

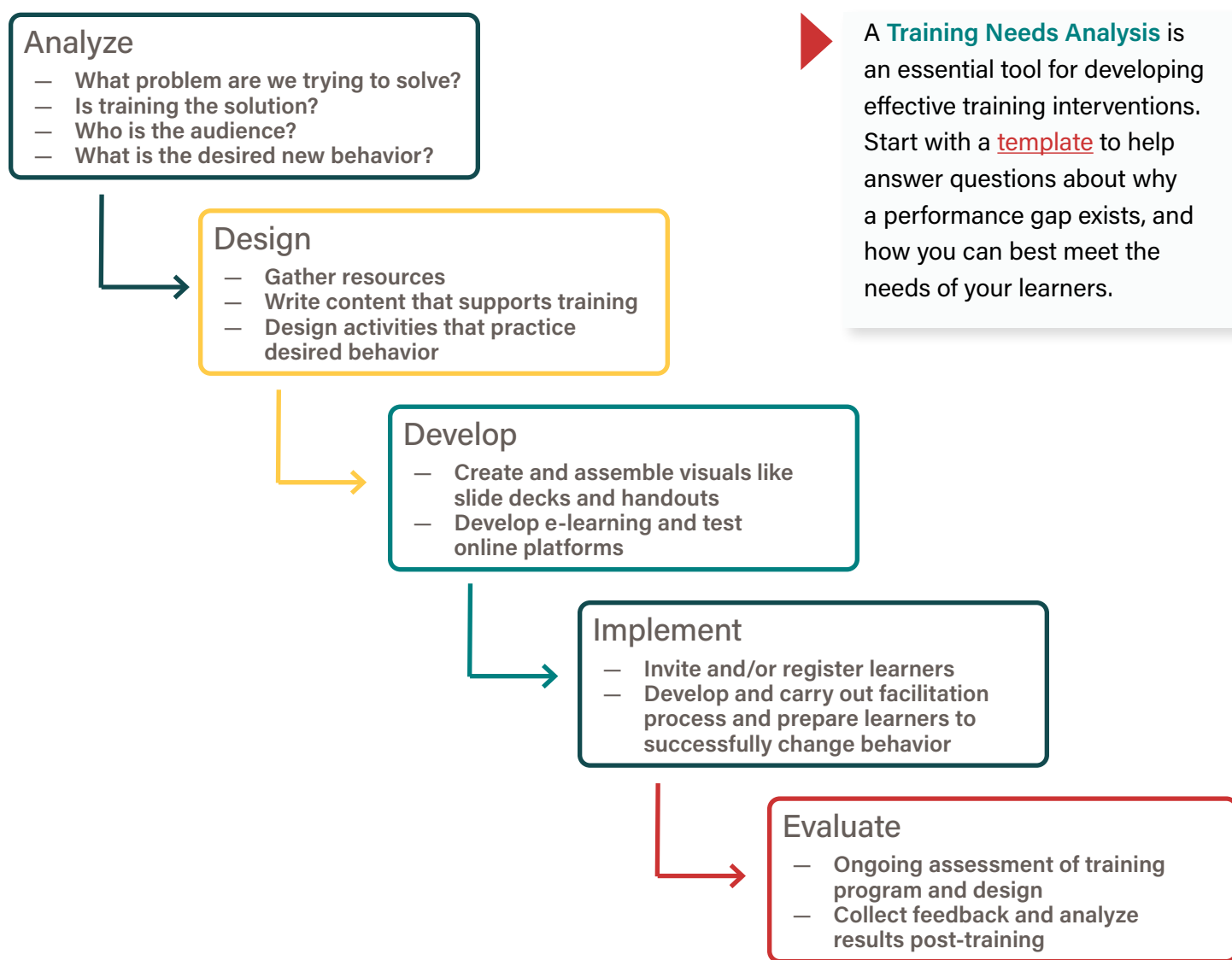
A company's code of conduct and applicable laws define worker rights that suppliers, including the producers who directly employ farmworkers, must respect. Workers should be informed of their rights, including the right to file a grievance, through formalized communication channels, such as contracts, workplace posters, and regular training. Where literacy is limited, or where language barriers exist, communication channels and training materials should be modified and information should be clearly explained verbally in languages workers understand and by a person workers trust.

Worker advocates, including unions and civil society organizations, should also be aware of workers' legal and code-based rights and avenues for reporting grievances and seeking remedy for any harms.



# Effective training design at a glance

In addition to knowing who needs to know what, good trainings are designed with an understanding of the specific jobs and tasks involved and what behaviors need to change to achieve your goals. Training materials should be relevant to your audience, and should provide opportunities to practice “what good looks like” to support your goals. And finally, an evaluation of how behaviors change over time as a result of your training will demonstrate the effectiveness of your training. Here’s a snapshot:





# Means and Methods of Delivery

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There are multiple formats and approaches for implementing training. It is important to consider what means and methods will be most effective. For example, a new hire will benefit from a basic orientation about the job and what to expect, whereas an incumbent senior manager may be better suited for engaging practice activities and capacity-building opportunities that can be cascaded to the people who support him/her.

Building awareness, understanding the motivations of your audience and empathizing with their pain points, and reinforcing their abilities to implement good practices should not be a single event; constant reinforcement and support is essential. Here are some additional considerations and tips:

- Start out by socializing and then reinforcing the importance of your codes through supplier webinars or in-person summits.
- Introduce your code standards during conversations related to procurement. During the contracting phase spell out your company's compliance expectations and your expectation for suppliers to include them in their contracts with their suppliers and workers).
- Provide online orientation training or guidebooks with detailed interpretative guidance (e.g., explanations of auditable standards) and guidance on best practices for implementation and development of risk controls.
- Combine your social compliance training with other supplier training, such as training on productivity, good agricultural practices, quality assurance, and specific technical skills.
- Consider employing in-house staff to develop and deliver trainings rather than contracting out this function or using training materials developed by a trade association or other membership group.

## Is training the answer?

After you've identified your goal, you need to determine what is preventing you from reaching that goal. What should your supply chain actors be doing and why aren't they doing it? Often what prevents people from doing what they need to be doing is not resolved through training.

For example, if the job tasks that need to be done are related to knowledge and skills, you can likely develop training that will help. But if the things that are preventing people from doing the tasks they need completing a given task to do are related to the work environment, culture, or motivation, training will likely not solve the problem. Instead you might determine that your policies need to be clarified, or an improved workflow or process would solve the problem, or a step-by-step guidebook would help to support your suppliers to better implement your expectations.

- Use a training of trainers (TOT) approach, which embeds training competencies along with other aspects of supplier capacity. For example, traders can be trained and then charged with training all their producers and processors on the company's code of conduct requirements and how their compliance with the code will be monitored.
- Contract trade unions and NGOs specialized in labor and human rights issues to assist in the development of training materials and to raise awareness among workers and communities on labor and human rights compliance issues.

## Audience considerations

- If low **levels of literacy** is an issue, it may be challenging for participants to understand written materials. In these cases, training and communication methods and materials should be designed to rely on graphics, pictograms, and oral communication so learners can obtain necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities. Specific training formats that can be used include video presentations, graphical materials, smartphone apps, posters, and other materials that rely primarily on visual storytelling.
- Trainers must also take into consideration the **languages spoken** by the workforce and ensure that, whenever possible, trainings are provided in workers' first language even if they have some degree of fluency in the predominant language spoken in the area in which the training is implemented. This will help to ensure that workers fully grasp the content and feel respected and comfortable in the training environment.
- **Gender** is an important consideration as well, as some women may feel uncomfortable sharing information or discussing sensitive topics such as sexual harassment and abuse when male participants or trainers are present.
- **Cultural norms** should also be taken into consideration, such as whether eye contact and personal space are important. It is also important to understand the most effective teaching styles for the target country and audience. For example, in many cultures, raising one's hand to answer a question, having a group "brainstorm," or engaging in role-playing are uncommon and would likely be ineffective teaching techniques.

## BEST PRACTICES

# CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD TRAINING PROGRAMS

### Make it relevant!

It is important that people see the value in spending time learning. The facilitator should always have the learning objectives in mind to ensure the most important goals are being delivered.

### Include interactivity and assignments

Adults learn best when they are active and engaged. Most people learn through a combination of three different learning styles — auditory (learn through hearing), visual (learn through seeing), and experience (learn through doing). Incorporate a mix of these three different approaches to maximize retention.

### Integrate emotionally-driven content

Consider painting a picture about the larger context and important role and ability supply chain actors in the coffee sector have to improve lives through their work.

### Consider prior experience and knowledge

Adult learners have more life experience and have accumulated more knowledge than younger students. This is a benefit of teaching adults new things but it also presents a challenge because it means there is less “space” in their brains to absorb new memories and information. Therefore, it is important that the facilitator tap into the recognizable experiences of the audience and “attach” new ideas to them. When adult learners bring in their own personal experiences and build on them, they are more likely to feel invested in training sessions and recall new knowledge later.

### Emphasize real-life benefits

Every adult wants to know the answer to this important question while learning: what’s in it for me? The facilitator should emphasize key points and activities by summarizing how these takeaways will improve their ability to do their job.

# The Importance of Measurement

**Did your training accomplish what it promised or set out to do?** Did the knowledge or skills taught increase a learner's understanding or influence their perceptions? Are the learners practicing the desired behaviors the training set out to change?

## Evaluating learners

It is important to take time to evaluate the outcomes of trainings. This can be done immediately after a training engagement to get reactions to the training, which is a valuable step for improving facilitation skills. But the real outcomes are measured after some time has lapsed. Evaluating training outcomes once learners have had an opportunity to apply what they have learned on the job will give you a better understanding of where improvement can continue to be made and any barriers that are preventing your stakeholders from improving their performance. Several resources can help you to build an effective evaluation process and tools:

- [Kirkpatrick's four levels of training evaluation](#)
- [CDC guidance on training effectiveness](#)

## Other evaluation tools

Data on behavior change as a result of training can also come from:

- key performance indicators (KPIs) and improvement targets
- surveys of those in a position to observe change, such as crew leaders or managers responsible for tracking migrant worker complaints about labor broker fees
- grievance reports and worker surveys
- social responsibility audit reports
- follow-up needs assessment surveys (among any and all stakeholder groups)

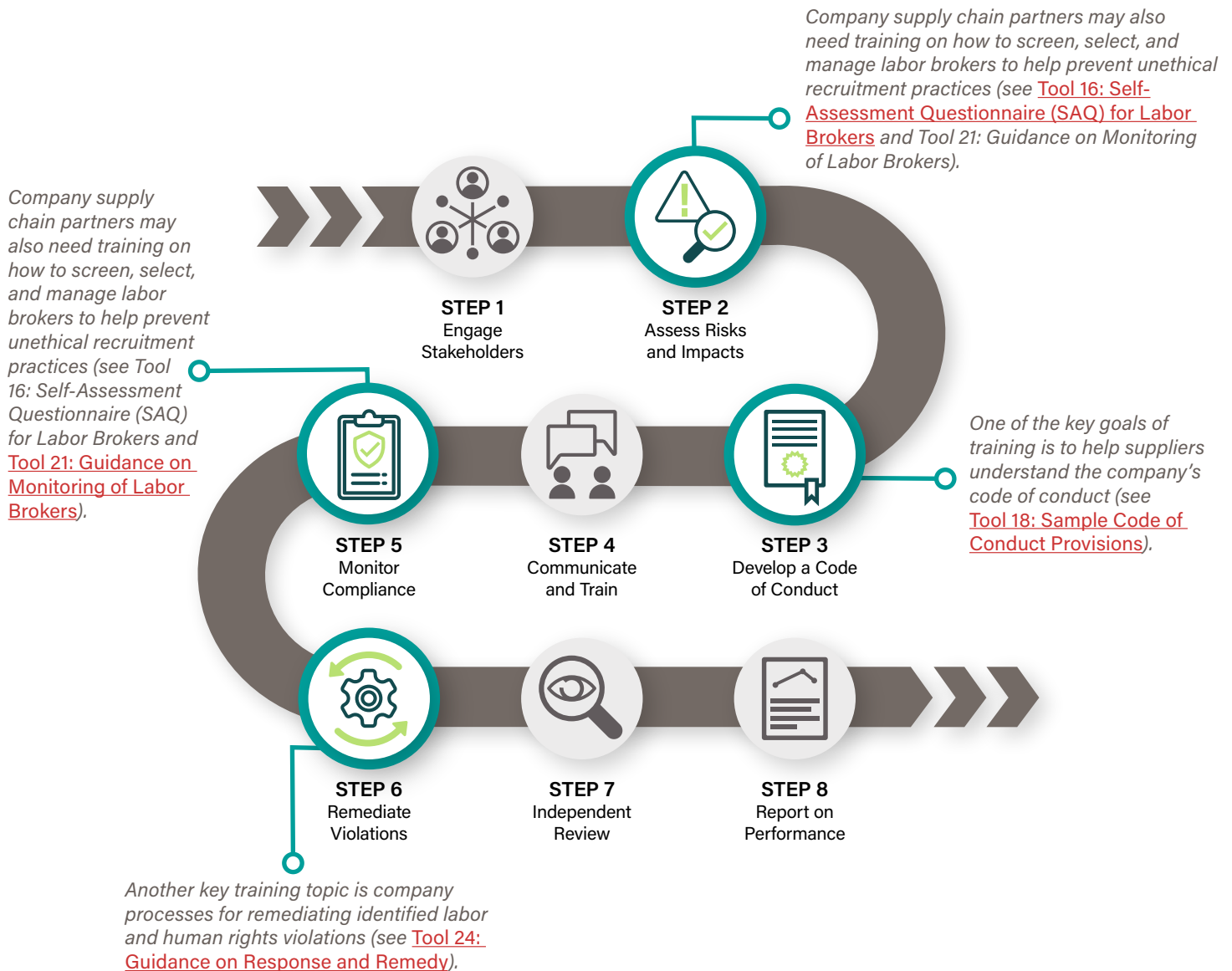
KPIs and their improvement targets should be **time-bound**, **measure impact**, and be **informed by comparative data**. For example,

- KPI: 100% of farm workers trained on use of grievance channels for reporting discrimination on farms
- Improvement target: 100% of interviewed workers report having been trained in the last six months on using the grievance channel to report discrimination

See [Tool 28: Guidance on Public Reporting](#) for more guidance on setting "SMART" KPIs.



## Next Steps



## Endnotes

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1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023, <https://cdc.gov>, accessed May 2023, <[https://www.cdc.gov/training/development/pdfs/analyze/a\\_natnachecklist-508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/training/development/pdfs/analyze/a_natnachecklist-508.pdf)>
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