

## Introduction to VOICE

Voice Norge AS is a Norwegian retailer and brand house with a strong commitment to responsible business practices and sustainability. Voice Norge AS considers responsible business conduct to be a prerequisite for sustainable development. Ethical conduct, environmental responsibility, and societal well-being are key in VOICE's strategy, operations, and supply chain relations. We are committed to continuous improvement with regards to sustainability and seek to make a positive impact in our supply chain. To achieve this, Voice Norge AS works actively with due diligence for responsible business conduct and expect our business partners to do the same.

The below minimum criteria provide the basis for pre-qualifying suppliers who may supply products to be sold in any of VOICE retail stores or through any of our brands.

## VOICE Minimum criteria for suppliers

The formal minimum criteria for entering into an agreement with Voice Norge AS are listed below.

### General minimum criterial for suppliers

Signature and acceptance of <i>VOICE Guidelines and Requirements for Suppliers</i> , and commitment to pass on requirements and standards to all relevant subcontractors and -suppliers.
Provision of a designated point of contact for following up on the implementation of <i>VOICE Guidelines and Requirements for Suppliers</i> including name, email address, phone number, and job title.
Traceability: The supplier can provide an overview over and share information about where the product and its different production processes have been performed, and where the different parts of any and each product are produced, as well as the origin of all raw materials in the product.
Acceptance of and adherence to <i>VOICE Quality Assurance Manual</i> .
Acceptance of and adherence to <i>VOICE Chemical Contract and requirements</i> .
Acceptance of and adherence to <i>VOICE Packaging, Delivery, and Trading Policy for Suppliers</i> .
Acceptance of and adherence to further standards as described in VOICE Supplier Manual (i.e. VOICE Migrant Labour Standards, Animal Welfare Standards and Anti-Corruption Standards).
Willingness to share necessary information on request to support that the criteria in this document have been met.

### Minimum criteria for prioritized areas

Area	Minimum criteria
VOICE Brands tier 1 producers (production of finished garments)	Signature and acceptance of 1.) <i>amfori Code of Conduct</i> and 2.) <i>amfori Terms of Implementation</i> .
	A valid amfori BSCI monitoring result with a minimum overall score of "C" demonstrating both willingness and ability for continuous improvement.
	Completion of an environmental self-assessment through amfori BEPI and willingness to go through an independent BEPI audit upon request.
	Provision of access to production facilities and relevant associated buildings (canteen, housing quarters etc.) upon request.
Health, environment and safety in Bangladesh and Pakistan	All production facilities must be inspected through the Accord and showcase the ability to continuously improve on results from the initial inspection onwards.

*Voice Norge AS reserves the right to regularly review and update above requirements and will inform Suppliers accordingly.*

By completing *VOICE Supplier Application Form* a potential supplier is expected to provide the necessary information for VOICE to check compliance against our minimum criteria as specified in this document. Failure to provide sufficient information to complete the onboarding process may result in delays or refusal of acceptance and hinder the start of supplier relations.

Further information about our policies and standards will be provided upon filling out and signing the attached supplier application form and returning it to [SourcingVoice@voice.no](mailto:SourcingVoice@voice.no). Submitting the form will also initiate the formal onboarding process as a supplied with VOICE.

# VOICE Guidelines and Requirements for Suppliers

Version #	Date passed	Passed by	Last edit made on / by (date / name of employee)	Type of change
1.0	26.10.23	Voice Norge AS board	13.10.23   Jan Thomas Hagen	Major policy update

## Introduction

Voice Norge AS strives towards responsible business conduct that respects people, society, and the environment. These guidelines and requirements for suppliers have been developed as a complement to **VOICE Policy for Responsible Business Conduct**<sup>1</sup>. To achieve responsible business conduct we wish to work in close partnership with our suppliers and business partners. Voice Norge AS considers collaboration to be a prerequisite for responsible business conduct, and key to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

## Scope

This document outlines Voice Norge AS view on what defines responsible business operations and specifies the formal requirements that all suppliers must meet when entering into an agreement with Voice Norge AS.

In addition to this document, **VOICE Supplier Manual** provides additional information on VOICE strategy and objectives to promote more sustainable and responsible production and business practices in our value chain. The supplier manual also contains specific operational requirements, standards and principles for different thematic areas outlined in this document, i.e., on employing migrant workers and home workers in production, our environmental standards and requirements, and our animal welfare standards for any fiber or process used in the production of products sold through Voice Norge AS.

## Requirements – VOICE own business

**VOICE Policy for Responsible Business Conduct**, **VOICE Code of Conduct** and **VOICE Code of Conduct for Suppliers** (below) forms the basis for our sustainability work, including in our supply chain relations. We seek to improve our policy and practice where relevant.

Our suppliers and partners can expect from VOICE that our purchasing practices strengthen, and do not undermine, their opportunity to deliver on our requirements related to people, society, and the environment. Voice Norge AS always seeks collaboration in order to achieve responsible business conduct. However, we will end business relationships or other forms of collaboration if our supplier or partner does not meet our expectations for responsible business conduct as set forth in this document.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.voice.no/globalassets/barekraft/voice-policy-for-responsible-business-conduct.pdf>

## Requirements – Conditions in the supply chain (Suppliers)

All suppliers and partners to VOICE are expected to work focused and systematically to comply with the requirements put forth in this document. Our guidelines and requirements cover fundamental requirements on human rights, labour rights, anti-corruption, animal welfare and the environment.

All suppliers to Voice Norge AS must:

- Sign and commit to following **VOICE Guidelines and Requirements for Suppliers**, hereunder **VOICE Code of Conduct for Suppliers**, and further instructions and standards in **VOICE Supplier Manual**.
- In addition, all VOICE Brand manufacturers must commit to the *amfori Code of Conduct* and *amfori Terms of Implementation*.
- Conduct due diligence for responsible business conduct. This involves; conducting risk assessments to identify potential negative impact on people, society, and the environment and to stop, prevent and reduce such impact. The measures put in place must be monitored and their effect evaluated. The measures taken must be communicated to those affected by your actions. If the supplier is responsible for the negative impact/damage, they are responsible for providing remedy.<sup>2</sup>
- Show willingness and ability to continuous improvement for people, society, and the environment through collaboration.
- At the request of Voice Norge AS be able to document how they, and relevant subcontractors, work to comply with the guidelines.
- Have a system in place to manage complaints related to human rights, labour rights, the environment and corruption.
- Avoid trading with partners that have activities in countries or regions where a trade boycott is imposed by the UN and/or Norwegian Government authorities.

If the supplier breaches the standards set forth in this policy, or, after requests by Voice Norge AS does not show willingness or ability to conform to the requirements in this policy, this is grounds for cancellation of contract.

### Documentation requirements and follow-up guidance

At the request of Voice Norge AS the supplier must be able to document how they, their sub-suppliers and any potential subcontractors, work to comply with the requirements set forth in this policy. This may be done through collecting documentation and information, follow-up meetings and/or further mapping of conditions in the supply chain.

All suppliers must submit names and contact information (including full address of physical facility) of all suppliers, producers, sub-suppliers, subcontractors, and any other parties in the supply chain involved in the production of products for Voice Norge AS. Voice Norge AS reserves the right to request further information and/or an external assessment of suppliers, sub-suppliers or subcontractors' compliance with this policy and code of conduct.

Any questions regarding these guidelines and requirements can be submitted to [barekraft@voice.no](mailto:barekraft@voice.no).

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<sup>2</sup> OECD, «Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct», 2018.

## VOICE Code of Conduct for Suppliers

These principles for responsible business conduct are based on UN and ILO conventions and provide minimum, not maximum standards. The relevant legal framework at the place of production shall be respected. Where national laws and regulations address the same subjects as these guidelines, the most stringent shall apply.

### **1. Forced and compulsory labour (ILO Conventions Nos. 29 and 105)**

- 1.1. There shall be no forced, bonded or involuntary prison labour.
- 1.2. Workers shall not be required to lodge deposits or identity papers with their employer and shall be free to leave their employer after reasonable notice.

### **2. Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining (ILO Conventions Nos. 87, 98, 135 and 154)**

- 2.1. Workers, without distinction, shall have the right to join or form trade unions of their own choosing and to bargain collectively. The employer shall not interfere with, obstruct, the formation of unions or collective bargaining.
- 2.2 Workers' representatives shall not be discriminated and shall have access to carry out their representative functions in the workplace.
- 2.3 Where the right to freedom of association and/or collective bargaining is restricted under law, the employer shall facilitate, and not hinder, the development of alternative forms of independent and free workers representation and negotiations.

### **3. Child Labour (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ILO Conventions Nos. 138, 182 and 79, and ILO Recommendation No. 146)**

- 3.1. The minimum age for workers shall not be less than 15 and comply with the national minimum age for employment, or; the age of completion of compulsory education, whichever of these is higher. If local minimum is set at 14 years in accordance with developing country exceptions under ILO Convention 138, this lower age may apply.
- 3.3. There shall be no recruitment of child labour defined as any work performed by a child younger than the age(s) specified above.
- 3.4. No person under the age of 18 shall be engaged in labour that is hazardous to their health, safety or morals, including night work.
- 3.5. Policies and procedures for remediation of child labour prohibited by ILO conventions no. 138 and 182, shall be established, documented, and communicated to personnel and other interested parties. Adequate support shall be provided to enable such children to attend and complete compulsory education.

### **4. Discrimination (ILO Conventions Nos. 100 and 111 and the UN Convention on Discrimination Against Women)**

- 4.1. There shall be no discrimination at the workplace in hiring, compensation, access to training, promotion, termination or retirement based on ethnic background, caste, religion, age, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, union membership or political affiliation.
- 4.2. Measures shall be established to protect workers from sexually intrusive, threatening, insulting or exploitative behaviour, and from discrimination or termination of employment on unjustifiable grounds, e.g. marriage, pregnancy, parenthood or HIV status.

### **5. Harsh or Inhumane Treatment (UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Art. 7)**

- 5.1. Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual or other harassment and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation, is prohibited.

## **6. Health and Safety (ILO Convention No. 155 and ILO Recommendation No. 164)**

6.1. The working environment shall be safe and hygienic, bearing in mind the prevailing knowledge of the industry and of any specific hazards. Hazardous chemicals and other substances shall be carefully managed. Adequate steps shall be taken to prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, associated with, or occurring in, the course of work, by minimizing, so far as is reasonably practicable, the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment.

6.2. Workers shall receive regular and documented health and safety training, and such training shall be repeated for new or reassigned workers.

6.3. Access to clean toilet facilities and to potable water, and, if appropriate, sanitary facilities for food storage shall be provided.

6.4. Accommodation, where provided, shall be clean, safe and adequately ventilated, and shall have access to clean toilet facilities and potable water.

## **7. Wages (ILO Convention No. 131)**

7.1. Wages and benefits paid for a standard working week shall as minimum meet national legal standards or industry benchmark standards, whichever is higher. Wages should always be enough to meet basic needs, including some discretionary income.

7.2. All workers shall be provided with a written and comprehensible contract outlining their wage conditions and method of payments before entering employment.

7.3. Deductions from wages as a disciplinary measure shall not be permitted.

## **8. Working Hours (ILO Convention Nos. 1 and 14)**

8.1. Working hours shall comply with national laws and benchmark industry standards, and not more than prevailing international standards. Weekly working hours should not on a regular basis be more than 48 hours.

8.2. Workers shall be provided with at least one day off for every 7 day period.

8.3. Overtime shall be limited and voluntary. Recommended maximum overtime is 12 hours per week, i.e. that the total working week including overtime shall not exceed 60 hours. Exceptions to this are accepted when regulated by a collective bargaining agreement.

8.4. Workers shall always receive overtime pay for all hours worked over and above the normal working hours (see 8.1 above), minimum in accordance with relevant legislation.

## **9. Regular Employment (ILO Convention Nos. 95, 158, 175, 177 and 181)**

9.1. Obligations to employees under international conventions, national law and regulations concerning regular employment shall not be avoided through the use of short term contracting (such as contract labour, casual labour or day labour), sub-contractors or other labour relationships.

9.2. All workers are entitled to a contract of employment in a language they understand.

9.3. The duration and content of apprenticeship programmes shall be clearly defined.

## **10. Marginalized Populations (UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 1 and 2)**

10.1. Production and the use of natural resources shall not contribute to the destruction and/or degradation of the resources and income base for marginalized populations, such as in claiming large land areas, use of water or other natural resources on which these populations are dependent.

## **11. Workers involvement and protection**

11.1 Management practices shall allow for and ensure the involvement of workers and their representatives in relevant decision-making processes, and the defined due diligence process.

11.2 Access to effective operational-level grievance mechanisms for individuals, communities and other stakeholders shall be established, and accurate and transparent records of any grievances raised, and actions taken to address such issues shall be kept.

## 12. Environment

12.1. Negative impact on the environment shall be reduced throughout the value chain. In line with the precautionary principle, measures shall be taken to continuously minimize greenhouse gas emissions and local pollution, the use of harmful chemicals, pesticides, and to ensure sustainable resource extraction and management of water, oceans, forest and land, and the conservation of biodiversity.

12.2. National and international environmental legislation and regulations shall be respected, and relevant discharge permits obtained.

12.3. No microplastics shall under any circumstance be used as an ingredient or added to products to obtain desired product qualities or specifications.

*Please refer to VOICE Supplier Manual for further information on our environmental standards, strategies and objectives.*

## 13. Corruption

13.1. Corruption in any form is not accepted, including bribery, extortion, kickbacks and improper private or professional benefits to customers, agents, contractors, suppliers, or employees of any such party or government officials.

*Please refer to VOICE Anti-Corruption Standards in the supplier manual for further information.*

## 14. Animal welfare

14.1 Animal welfare shall be upheld. Action should be taken to minimize negative impacts on the welfare of animals used for materials or work.

14.2 National and international animal welfare legislation and regulation shall be observed.

*Please refer to VOICE Animal Welfare Standards in the supplier manual for further information.*

## 15. Homeworking and migrant labours (ILO Convention No. 177 and ILO Convention Nos. 97, 143 and 181)

15.1 Homeworkers and migrant labours are entitled to equal treatment with other workers, including pay, health and safety, the right to organise, social security protection and protection against discrimination.

*Please refer to VOICE Homeworking Standards and VOICE Migrant Labour Standards in the supplier manual for further information.*

## Signature of acceptance

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name / Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Company

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Place / Date