

Written evidence submitted by Sedex (TFP0021)

Introduction to Sedex

Sedex is one of the world's leading ethical trade membership organisation, working with businesses to improve working conditions in global supply chains. We provide an online platform, tools and services to help businesses operate responsibly and sustainably, protect workers and source ethically.

Over 60,000 member organisations from 180 countries use the Sedex platform to exchange data, manage business risk, meet compliance and drive positive impact on people. We have 17 years of expertise and work with some of the world's most recognisable brands and standard-setting organisations.

Our short response to this inquiry considers the importance of the future of technology to ensure that the UK remains a leader in promoting human rights and ethical standards across the world.

Sedex response

Technology and data continue to be powerful enablers for diplomacy. Sophisticated tools, both established and emerging, can be used to support compliance and transparency in international agreements through capturing evidence, insight and activity at an aggregate level to support negotiation and decision-making by policymakers and diplomats.

Technology to gather data and insight on economic activity, trade and business operations helps the UK to maintain and promote its position as a world leader in ethical standards, environmental sustainability, working practices and workers' rights. Using advanced data and technology techniques, the FCDO can use technology to progress its foreign policy goals and soft power influence.

Gathering detailed data on commodities, trade activity and worker demographics allow policymakers – and others, including civil society and business – to understand global supply chains and the ethical risks within them. This information enables policymakers to build a picture of what commodities, services, products and product components are produced in what countries, and understand who is producing them.

This supports informed decision-making based on the social and environmental risks associated with different commodities, business activities and workers. For example, it's [estimated](#) that 80% of the world's garment workers are women – which means that this industry is particularly vulnerable to ethical issues such as gender-based violence and discrimination. Combine this information with data about which countries are the top producers for garments, and policymakers can build a deeper understanding of the wider context for garment workers and what decisions to make regarding aid, trade or diplomacy that will help to support these workers and drive responsible business practices in the top garment-producing nations.

Technologies such as blockchain also help to fuel transparency and visibility of supply chains, contributing further to this understanding of risks to workers and the environment around the world.

Sedex supports organisations with these goals through our own technology and software solutions. Our [tools](#) help organisations to capture data on their supply chains and the people within them, understand the ethical/social/environmental risks within them, assess the conditions and behaviours at supplier work sites, and analyse and report on this information to inform decision-making or taking action. All these activities support to promote ethical standards, human rights and environmental sustainability, and drive responsible practices, in international relationships.

Harnessing new technology allows us to strengthen these tools and produce more meaningful insights for our members. Incorporating new and additional data sources, employing predictive analytics and behavioural psychology, and evolving our platform to improve user experience help organisations to better understand, detect and address the social and environmental issues that may be occurring in their international economic relationships. This data and insight enables informed decision-making, policy-making and action – which ultimately supports compliance with best-practice standards, drives transparency in international agreements, and helps organisations such as the FCDO to pursue diplomatic aims and project the UK's position as a world leader in ethical standards and human rights.

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