

CLOTH & CO.

STANDARD FOR WORKING WITH ARTISANS

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Supporting artisans goes far beyond the creation of beautiful textiles. It has a profound impact on balancing gender inequality, uplifting local economies, and preserving cultural heritage and sustainability.

Artisan crafts carry a generational element, connecting a particular craft to cultural heritage and lineage. These traditions are woven into the fabric of communities, serving as a source of cohesion, pride, and meaning. They offer an alternative to the common rural migration to crowded and polluted urban centres, where wages are often low. The cultural diversity, much like biological diversity, enriches us and enhances our resilience. By supporting artisan traditions, we embrace cultural expression and foster meaningful collaborations with others. Our ability to preserve and promote cultural diversity not only makes us richer but also strengthens our connection to our shared history.

The Cloth & Co. Standard is designed to address the unique issues associated with working with artisans, which includes all labour performed in and not exclusive to a centralised site and home based work. This Standard promotes the importance of addressing significant issues in a workplace environment, tailored to work conducted outside a traditional factory setting. Cloth & Co. is committed to ensuring that the organisations and/or artisans that they engage adhere to this Standard along with all relevant standards imposed by local and international laws.

01 Child Labor

We value collaborative relationships with our artisans. We expect our artisans and/or the organisations that employ and coordinate our artisans to actively engage in open and constructive communication, share relevant information, and work towards mutually beneficial solutions.

01.1 The organisation and/or artisans conducting work shall not engage in or support the use of child labour. Child labour is defined as any work performed by a child or any person under the age of 15, unless the minimum age for work or mandatory schooling is higher by local law, in which case the stipulated higher age applies in that locality. Cloth & Co. understands that some work may be conducted in the home and around children, as well as the importance of passing down traditional artisanal techniques, however children should not be used in production except as provided for by ILO Recommendation 146.

01.2 The organisation and/or artisans conducting work shall not expose children or young workers to any situations - in or outside of the workplace that are hazardous or unsafe to their physical and mental health and development.

02 Forced or Compulsory Labor

02.1 All production must be done by individuals working of their own free will. The organisation and/or artisans conducting work shall not engage in or support the use of forced or compulsory labour.

03 Health and Safety

03.1 Whether a centralised set up or a home-based site, the workplace environment shall be a safe and healthy place to conduct work. All effective steps to prevent health and safety incidents and occupational injury or illness arising out of, associated with or occurring in the course of work shall be minimised or eliminated so far as is reasonably practicable.

04 Working Hours

04.1 All overtime shall be voluntary and Cloth & Co. will unequivocally respect the variabilities in production time, particularly when they are in relation to any circumstances that are external or outside of the artisan or organisations control e.g. force majeure.

05 Remuneration

05.1 All artisans and personnel must be paid a living wage. A living wage is defined as, but not exclusive to; a wage sufficient to provide the necessities and comforts essential to an acceptable standard of living.

05.2 All wages shall always be paid at or above legal or industry minimum standards, or collective bargaining agreements (where applicable).

05.3 Piece-rate payment structures should be fair as advised by the International Labour Organisation. Piece rate systems should be transparent, and reward difficulty and quality of work. Rates should be set to ensure that motivated workers can earn substantially more than minimum wage and at least a living wage. Work and remuneration should be in compliance with all local laws and regulations.

05.4 Artisans and/or personnel should always be paid in a timely manner.

05.5 Artisans employed on a piece rate system shall have the right to work for other clients.

05.6 Under a piece rate system, guidelines for quality and associated remuneration should be clearly defined. Deductions in remuneration against a substandard product for artisans and personnel may only be taken when these guidelines and quality expectations are standardised and clearly communicated prior to the acceptance of a production order.

06 Management System & Transparency

06.1 The organisation and/or artisans shall demonstrate a commitment to transparency.

06.2 Cloth & Co. and any coordinating organisation engaged by Cloth & Co. shall administer due diligence to ensure that this Standard is adhered to when engaging artisans.

06.3 Cloth & Co., the organisation and/or artisans shall demonstrate a commitment to improve on any areas not in compliance with this Standard, if an element does not meet the requirements of this Standard, necessary steps shall be taken to remediate identified issues.

07 Environmental Care

07.1 The organisation and/or artisans shall take all steps necessary to avoid a negative environmental impact, including but not exclusive to; minimizing waste, reduce energy and water use, reduce chemical input and impacts.

07.2 The organisation and/or artisans shall only use low impact materials in production of Cloth & Co. fabrics; environmentally friendly, recycled and/or natural fibres.

07.3 The organisation and/or artisans shall only use low impact dyes in production, which is defined as dyes that do not contain AZO or heavy metals like chrome, copper and zinc. Furthermore, responsible wastewater management shall be adhered to.

The Cloth & Co. Standard for Working with Artisans
Cloth & Co. May 2023

This is a voluntary Standard, setting out the requirements to be met by organisations and artisans working with or in association to Cloth & Co..

The foundational elements of this Standard are based on the UN Declaration of Human Rights, conventions of the ILO, the Social Accountability Standard, international human rights norms and national labour laws.