

## Sustainable Value Chain Research Project Overview

### What the research is

The sustainable value chain research project is an effort to find out what works in making a value chain (supply chain, distributors, partner organizations, etc.) sustainable. A large number of organizations are looking to make their value chains more sustainable, and this research will help them know what are the best ways to make that happen.

### How this project is different

At the beginning of the project, we examined the research others have done in this area in order to make sure we weren't duplicating what had already been done. Comparing existing research to what we are doing points to two very significant differences:

- Focus on the value chain versus the supply chain: While existing research focuses on an organization's suppliers, ours is broader: it encompasses suppliers, distributors, and partners (and a few internal aspects of the value chain as well)
- Focus on the most effective concrete actions: While others have looked into the overall level of interest in sustainability and companies' plans for the future (both of which are fine subjects of inquiry), our project is *not* primarily about interest level and plans. Instead, our research focuses on which concrete actions are most effective at increasing supply chain sustainability. For example, how much more effective are organizations that actively partner with their suppliers, rather than just giving them directions / requirements (see below)? The answer to questions like these will help organizations to put their time, energy, and resources where they will provide the greatest benefit.

### Conducting the research

The research consists of a survey sent to 50,000 - 100,000 respondents, interviews, case studies, and secondary research. A specific difference in how the research is conducted is tying specific aspects of the organizations (such as actively partnering with suppliers) to the level of success with value chain sustainability. This requires an in-depth examination of organizations' level of success at making their value chains more sustainable. We will do this by looking into the:

- Areas in which organizations have goals
- Magnitude of the goals (e.g., 5% improvement or 50% improvement)
- Timing of the goals
- Progress against the goals
- Importance of the goals

We will then analyze the results to answer the question: What increases the chance that an organization will achieve its goals for value chain sustainability?