



LUPC carried out a social audit of a Shield Scientific sub-contracted glove manufacturer located in Malaysia to check the working conditions of migrant workers. This project is part of LUPC's focus to be the leader in responsible procurement by promoting ethical standards across supply chains collaboratively with suppliers.

LUPC Senior Contracts Manager, Darran Whatley, travelled to Malaysia in collaboration with Asia Inspection (now QIMA), an experienced auditing company, in October 2018. The audit was initiated by Darran's scoping exercises and spend analysis on the Laboratory Consumables category, which highlighted that across five University Purchasing Consortia, more than £4m is spent on laboratory gloves alone.

The auditing team and Darran Whatley found that the conditions in the factory were fully compliant with Malaysian law and mostly compliant with the Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI) base code. It identified six minor non-conformances that needed to be addressed. The first five were rectified within 30 days with photographic evidence, showing that all parties equally understood the importance of compliance.

Four of the non-conformances related to ETI Base Code, an internationally recognised code of labour practice, which LUPC has voluntarily incorporated into its frameworks. These included:

- The need to appoint a senior member of management to manage implementation of the ETI Base Code.
- The need to communicate the ETI Base Code to factory employees.
- The need to communicate the ETI Base Code to their supply chain.



- Potentially exceeding the ETI Base Code on weekly working hours.

The rectification of the fifth non-conformance was the replacement of an inadequate covering of an electric box.

The sixth focused on improving the brightness of lighting in one of the workshops.

For the non-conformance related to potentially exceeding the ETI Base Code on weekly working hours, LUPC confirms that the factory fully complies with Malaysian law.

According to the audit and the factory's evidence and response, overtime is voluntary and workers have one day off in every seven, complying with the majority of the ETI Base Code 6. LUPC is aware that the ETI Base Code was not implemented or communicated to the factory or its employees and has promised to follow up with framework suppliers to ensure the Code is implemented and adhered to in supply chains.



“I am very proud Darran went so far for LUPC and the Members. It makes me feel confident that we are directing our own future and continuing to take the lead in responsible procurement”.

Don Bowman, LUPC's Director.

The audit covered a three-day trip, spending six hours in the factory with a translator who communicated with the 99% migrant workforce. In total, 26 workers were interviewed, six individually and four groups of five were drawn from the 692 workers to get a representative idea of what it is like to work in the factory.

The Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit (SMETA) 2 Pillar method was used, which utilises the ETI Base Code, matching LUPC's commitment. We were keen to use this methodology as it attempts to ensure “best practice ethical audit techniques” to evaluate all elements of responsible business practice. The service's reliability was also a factor when choosing this method, with 20,000 audits uploaded to Sedex, the creator of SMETA audits, every year.

It is a positive action from SHIELD Scientific to allow its supply chain to be audited and it is worth noting their cooperation during this process to rectify all minor non-conformances. This collaborative relationship resulted in substantial changes to the lives of people who help ensure that Member's laboratories can perform to their high standards.

Marisol Bernal, Responsible Procurement Officer.

