



Training of Garment Trainers to upgrade MSEs in garment sector in 4 districts in Sri Lanka



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Abbreviations used in this report

| | |
|------|--------------------------------------|
| BDS | Business Development Services |
| CITI | Clothing Industry Training Institute |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| LOCA | Local Competitive Advantage |
| MSEs | Micro and Small Enterprises |
| Rs | Rupees (Sri Lanka currency) |
| TOT | Training of Trainers |
| TNA | Training Needs Assessment |
| VTC | Vocational Training Centre |

1. Background

The ILO Enter-Growth project aims to improve the small enterprise sector and stimulate local economic development through, amongst others, LOCA exercises. LOCA¹ stands for Local Competitive Advantage, a tool to assess opportunities and constraints for small enterprise development in a local economy. In 2005, the Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in the garments sector in all four target districts (Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Puttalam and Kurunegala) were identified as a sector with potential. It consists mainly of home-based garment manufacturers who produce ready-to-wear clothes sold at markets and fairs and custom-made clothes made upon individual demand. The garments are mostly bought by women and children. Though having potential, the sector is affected by low quality and low productivity issues. The garments produced by home-based manufacturers are often of inferior quality, with fitting and finishing problems. Moreover, efficiency and productivity are low, resulting in high production costs per item.

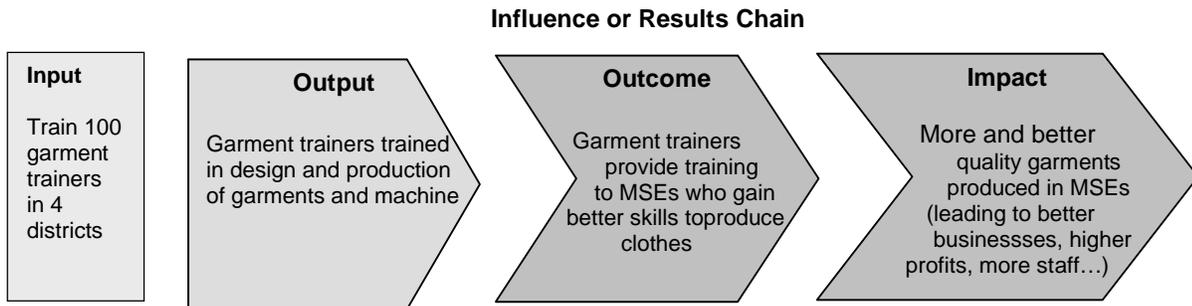
At a workshop of BDS providers represented on the MSE Forums facilitated by the project, it was agreed that these MSEs can be upgraded such that they can produce better and more garments by introducing them to more methodical and professional ways of designing and sewing. This could eventually generate higher profits and more jobs within these businesses.

It was agreed that, to reach out to large numbers of MSEs, the project would upgrade the skills of private sector trainers of garment producers in each district. These trainers would pass on their new skills to the MSEs, who would so improve their design and manufacturing practices as well as the sewing machine maintenance procedures, which were the three main needs that had been identified.

2. Enter-Growth plan

The ILO Enter-Growth plan was to set up a Training of Trainers (TOT) intervention to upgrade the MSEs in the garment sector. Through a consultant, an initial inventory of garment training providers was to be made in the four districts. Only private sector trainers were to be considered and not trainers from governmental departments, in line with the market development paradigm for Business Development Services (BDS). After the identification of the potential TOT participants, the CITI (Clothing Industry Training Institute) was hired to perform a Training Needs Assessment (TNA), design the programme and conduct the TOTs in 4 districts. In total, the intervention took 16 months to complete: from the initial needs assessment to providing follow up services for the trainees of the 5th program in Anuradhapura in the last part of 2007. Individual follow-up after the TOT was also part of CITI's contract. This should lead to the following Influence Chain:

¹ LOCA is worldwide known as PACA – Participatory appraisal of Competitive Advantage. It is a product of Mesopartners. For more information see: www.mesopartner.com



| OUTPUT INDICATORS | OUTCOME INDICATORS | IMPACT INDICATORS |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Number of Trainers trained (TOT) 2. Effectiveness of the CITI trainers 3. Satisfaction level of the trainees trained in the TOT 4. Applicability and Relevance of the training to trainer | 1. Number of MSE garment manufacturers that have been trained 2. Increase in the number of manufacturers that they train monthly / annually 3. Satisfaction level of the MSE about the training 4. Relevance and applicability of the training to the MSEs | 1. Increase in the quantity and quality of the garments (higher productivity) 2. Resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increase in revenue & profit b. MSEs employ other staff c. MSE business expansion |

To see the effects, outcomes and impacts of the intervention, a total of 34 trainers in the four districts have been interviewed, as well as 18 of their trainees (of which 5 MSEs).

3. What actually happened

Implementation

In the identification phase, it turned out that while in some districts (e.g. Kurunegala) the consultant identified a good number of private-sector trainers; in other districts (Puttalam) it appeared more difficult to find a sufficient number of private sector trainers. In reality, quite a few 'trainers' who had been identified were not full-time trainers but rather small-scale manufacturers who did some training but mostly with their own staff. Moreover, to make up for the insufficient numbers of private sector trainers, especially in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, some government trainers were identified and selected by CITI, despite explicit mention in their Terms of Reference that the TOT was only for trainers from private sector.

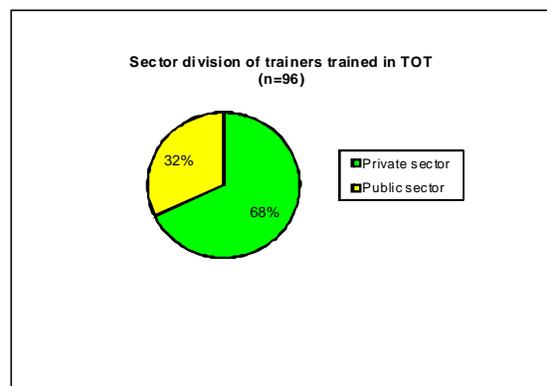
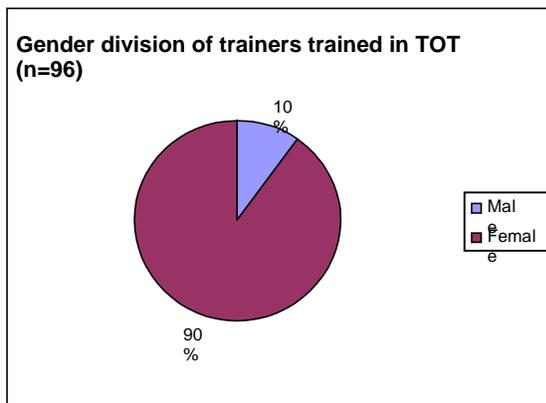
This can be explained by considering the economic and social indicators of the districts. Kurunegala district has a thriving commercial environment, whereas the other 3 districts are mainly agricultural districts.

CITI reports that the reason for the fact that government trainers were included is that in reality many government trainers are *also* providing training on a private basis, in evening hours and weekends, to private clients.

After the identification and selection phase, CITI conducted meetings with the people to obtain insights in their training needs. CITI looked at the educational qualifications of the potential trainers, as well as at their technical knowledge on topics such as pattern making, production quality, mechanics and textile. This appears to have been done extensively in Kurunegala, and to a lesser extent in the other districts where fewer people showed up for the TNA interview. Based on the TNA which appeared more or less uniform across the districts, a standard 10-day curriculum was designed (see annex).

All in all, 96 people have been trained by CITI between November 2006 and February 2008 (see above: was it November 2007 or February 2008?). The breakdown per sector and by gender can be found below. Of the 96 trained, one-third were employed by various vocational training departments of the government, while the other two-thirds were trainers and/or garment manufacturers from the private sector. It is not fully clear how many of the private sectors trainers are 'full-time' trainers and how many are primarily manufacturers who engage in training of their own staff, and sometimes outside people as well. In the sample, the majority (80%) of interviewed trainers classified themselves as trainer/manufacturer.

A total of five two-week batches of training - one batch each in Kurunegala, Polonnaruwa, & Puttalam and two batches in Anuradhapura - have been completed.



Effectiveness / relevance of the TOT

To analyze the extent to which the TOT has been relevant and applicable to the participants we have to distinguish between the various types of (un)intended participants:

1. Full-time private sector trainers (intended) - 6 in the sample
2. Manufacturers who engage partly in private sector training (own staff or others) (partly intended) - 22 in the sample
3. Governmental trainers who may or may not engage in some private sector training (not intended) - 6 in the sample

The study found that in reality, there is no 'clear cut' boundary between those types of participants...it is rather a mix: there were even public sector trainers, who are at the same time MSE manufacturers *and* have done some training in the evening hours with others as private trainer.

The manufacturers who are not full time trainers found the training useful and benefited from it, and they have also passed on their learning to their staff. The study has also shown that some government trainers found it difficult to apply what they have learned in the TOT since they are unable to change their institute's curriculum, while in Anuradhapura some trainers did add their learning to the existing curriculum.

Knowledge and skills

All in all, most interviewed participants and especially the full-time private sector trainers, said that the training was an eye opener for them. The main reason for this is that they were introduced to the

block method², yet a lot of other skills were also gained through the TOT.

| Skills acquired | Times mentioned (n=38) |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Block pattern / cutting | 29 |
| Design | 12 |
| Measuring | 12 |
| Proper finishing | 19 |
| Machine maintenance | 15 |
| Use of machine accessories | 4 |

For many participants these skills were not new...all the interviewed people have been in the garment sector for at least 3 years, some even up to 30 years. What was eye-opening is that they were introduced to a *methodical* way of designing and making garments.

Pace

The training was conducted during 10 full days and this was sufficient as per the majority of the interviewees. At the same time, some people mentioned that they were not very satisfied with the pace of the training (too fast) as they did not have an opportunity to actually practise the method and produce a garment using the block method at the training. Actually some trainees wanted to apply their knowledge and show samples of their work to the CITI trainers to get their feedback. However due to time constraints and travel distance of CITI's Colombo-based trainers this happened only in one case. One TOT was conducted with an interval of a few days, hence trainees had opportunities to practise and show their sample. This was much appreciated

Type of sewing machine

The TOT focused on using so-called “Juki Type” (industrial) sewing machine. Some trainers use this Juki machine, while others – including those who are full-time professional trainers – use the simple domestic machines. Obviously, the knowledge about the Juki machine and the usage of accessories / attachments and repair and maintenance, was only valuable to those who use these types of machines. The sample of 38 trainers does not clearly indicate which type of machine they are now actually using, but few (5) clearly mention the usefulness of the Juki machine knowledge in the training.

“Training on accessories and repair and maintenance is not valuable as I don’t have a Juki machine and I don’t have accessories. I also don’t have money to buy one. Even if I got a Juki machine now it is of no use as I have forgotten because I have not been able to practice what was taught at the course..” Jasinth Perera - Polonnaruwa

“I got to know about machine maintenance and knowledge about the Juki operating system. I am not using it but I have an idea to expand in 2009”. PMP Rajapakse – Polonnaruwa

² Block Pattern Construction = a foundation pattern that reflects the size, shape and posture of the human figure without the inclusion of style features. It is constructed according to the measurements for the central waist size of a size range for an individual person. A copy of the block is created to create a garment style. The advantage of using block patterns is that they are permanent records of the correct fit

“I have knowledge on cutting large volumes in shorter time. I can now use my Juki machine in a quick way...Pryantha Perera – Puttalam.

“I have a Juki machine and I also have all the accessories now I use them. I can do a bit of maintenance but for major repairs I call a technician’. Surangi Siriwardene - Kurunegala

For CITI it is standard procedure to work with industrial machines, they exclusively work with Juki machines. Although they did realize that not all TOT candidates have access to those machines, they felt it was still relevant since some of them mentioned their intention to buy those machines after the training. Because the rationale of the intervention was to upgrade the professionalism and production methods of the home-based garment producers, it was felt that introducing the high-speed Juki machine was going to benefit them. However, in many cases people were not able to purchase Juki machines and there was no assistance for them to access this type of machine after the training.

Type of garments

While the feedback from the trainers about the skills gained in the training is mainly positive, there have been a few critical comments as to the type of garments (shirt, skirt, and blouse) which they were trained to produce with the block pattern. It is difficult to compete in the market for these ‘standard’ type clothes because of large quantities of stock dumpages from factories in Sri Lanka. At the same time, there is a second tier ready made garments market for clothes of slightly lower quality and price, which was the target market for this intervention.

Despite of this, some interviewed trainers mentioned the need for more customized products, for example, to learn about women’s clothes, saree blouses, children’s garments, embroider garments, bed sheets, bags, curtains and other items for which there is a demand in the region. *“We are trying to compete with readymade clothes lots which we can’t. We need to be sewing Saree blouses and other women’s clothing items to survive. Why was this not included in the course?”* C.K. Edirisinghe of Anuradhapura

The argument of CITI to focus on ‘standard’ garments is as follows: *‘once you know how to make a basic blouse, one can easily adapt to make any type of blouse, especially saree blouse. Producing children’s clothes is merely a matter of scaling down the standard block pattern...’*, CITI trainer.

While this is probably true that adult sizes can easily be converted in children's sizes, this message has perhaps not been clearly conveyed during the TOT. Due to limited time for the TOT (10 days) the choice was made to present the standard blocks. All in all, more than half of the trained trainers and manufacturers stated they also produce standard garments hence to them, the course was very useful.

4. First signs of impact

Outcome of the Training

The expected outcome of the TOT is that the trained trainers pass on their improved knowledge and skills to MSEs. Out of the 34 trainers interviewed, 28 (82%)³ have somehow trained or passed on the learning to others. A total of 18 trainees of the private sector trainers have been interviewed and it appeared that 5 of them are MSE owners (with 2 to 3 workers each). Their turnover was kept mostly undisclosed. The remaining 13 trainees include MSE workers, students, home-based (part-time) seamstresses and women working in garment factories. Most of those interviewees have an ambition to start a small business but have not yet done so, for various reasons such as 'don't know how to start', 'don't know how to register', 'don't have machine or money for material'.

To further analyse the different outcomes of the TOT, we need to make a distinction between the different types of trainers trained.

Full-time private sector trainers

There are 6 full-time private sector trainers in the sample, and they stated to have trained over 465 students, most of whom own or work in a small enterprise (1 trainer in Kurunegala has reached 350 students). Some private sector trainers managed to set up new training courses for young people who were not yet in business. They have customized the syllabus to the demand and charge a fee of 500 Rs per month. However, the trainers mentioned difficulties in maintaining their students' participation. They also face competition from a governmental VTC which charges only 300 Rs per month. After participating in the CITI training one interviewee has been able to expand her training business into other areas. She has set up new courses and was able to increase the fees. Her syllabus has been updated by using the knowledge gained at the training.

Trainers cum manufacturers

With the majority (64%) of interviewed people in the sample classified as both trainer as well as manufacturer it is difficult to say how many new MSEs have been reached. The 22 people in the sample who are also manufacturing have trained at least 215 other people (or on average 10 persons per TOT participant). Most of them are their own staff, while some have reached out to other MSEs.

Impact of the Training

The impact of the TOT focuses on the *changes* which have taken place at the level of the end-users. When analysing the impact generated by the full-time private trainers, there are a few good cases which illustrate signs of impact, mostly in Kurunegala. Impact has taken place both within existing MSEs as well as – to a lesser extent – on the start-up of new business activities.

One trainer says she has trained MSEs for a period of 6 months, including intensive follow-up. As a result, and this has been confirmed by the end user, the MSEs have grown their business in terms of revenue. They have not increased the number of employees or ventured into new geographic areas.

³ Note that the sample of 34 trainers is not representative for the total population of 96, as it includes only those who were available for the interview and not those who could not be contacted and those who went out of the garment sector or abroad (not quantified)

Two trainers have trained young women who were not yet doing any commercial garment making. After the training, the girls engaged in home-based sewing activities, bringing an income to their families. This is a clear sign of impact on business start-up.

Another trainer / manufacturer states that she has managed to secure a large order from the police to produce uniforms. The block method and other learning from the TOT have allowed her to obtain this order.

Almost all trainees mention the use of the block pattern as the main benefit of the training, which allows better design and cutting with less wastage, as well as better finishing. They can produce garments that do not lose shape and do not have pleats and wrinkles at the joints. They also said that the garments now fit well. As such, the overall quality of the garments has improved. Many also remark that they would like to receive more customized training to design and make different products like wedding frocks, children's clothes, sarees, embroidered fabrics, bags, soft toys as well as financial assistance to purchase machines and materials and marketing assistance.

"The block system saves us time, money and material", is a quote of one of the trainers with a garment business.

The impact is clear in terms of increased efficiency and to some extent in increased turnover, yet most end-users stated that they have not grown their business in terms of profit or number of employees. There appear to be limits in the markets.

During the group discussion most agreed that there is room for business expansion but with small amounts as the customers can't afford too much. They also face stiff competition from sellers of stock lots, which is common in Sri Lanka where large garment manufactures for export are 'dumping' stocks on local markets.

5. Overall conclusions and learning

Looking at the effect-outcome-impact chain, the following specific conclusions can be drawn:

TOT relevant and useful

The training of trainers has been perceived by most interviewed trainers as useful; especially the introduction of the so-called block method was mentioned frequently as an eye-opener. Other skills gained by trainers/manufacturers include design, cutting of garments, proper finishing and machine maintenance. On the other hand, comments from some trainers indicate limitations to the relevance of the TOT for them, for example regarding the repair and maintenance part which focused on industrial sewing machines rather than domestic ones which many are actually using. Some trainers mentioned a need for more specialized fabric and design of garments, including children's clothes, elastics and saree blouses. Because it is difficult to compete with industrially made pants and skirts, they felt that the training could have been more customized to the needs in the districts.



Multiplier effect of TOT is taking place

Although there have been only a few months between the TOT and this study, the sample of interviewed trainers clearly demonstrates that trained trainers are passing on their newly acquired knowledge and skills to others. Especially the 6 interviewed full-time private sector trainers who have already reached 465 home-based garments workers.

The study has shown that the participants have used the TOT training in different ways:

1. Trainers starting or continuing garment courses to strengthen MSEs or home-based garment tailors
2. Trainers training students, not (yet) MSE owners, including MSE workers and even garment factory workers,
3. Manufacturers (who are also in the business themselves) who did not conduct formal courses but trained their staff on the job
4. Manufacturers who did not really engage in training but who may have improved their own skills

In other words, it can be concluded that the *intended* TOT multiplier or cascading effect, i.e. trainers who train other MSEs to strengthen them, is happening at the moment but on a limited scale so far. The primary reasons for this are:

- Few of the selected trainers in the TOT were actually full-time private sector trainers with the ambition to train others
- A relatively high number of government trainers (1/3 rd) participated (unintended) in the TOT; most of whom have been unable to change the curriculum in the VTC. Yet at the same time they are conducting trainings to others in the evening hours and weekend.
- According to some private sector trainers there is a low demand for garment training in the district and 'unfair' competition caused by public sector or NGO-type training providers who offer course for free or for lower fees.

Impact: better quality garments result in modest signs of MSE business improvement

The intended impact at MSE level (e.g. better quality garments, higher productivity, increased income and perhaps a larger workforce) is being achieved. The interviewed private trainers have actually trained other home-based garment producers who have reported better quality garments, more productivity and less wastage. Moreover, they have contributed to the start-up of new MSEs, by training young people (students) who have engaged in home-based garment producing activities. However, most of the trainees trained by the TOT-garment trainers who were not yet in business at the time, have not yet managed to start, reportedly because they do not have their own sewing machines and have no capital to buy materials and equipment.

Interviewed MSE owners who were trained by others as well as those who participated in the TOT mentioned clear improvements in, for example, quality of the garments and time and cost savings through better design and cutting patterns, but they could not translate these improvements into quantifiable results such as higher profits or income. Impact in terms of larger workforce were not (yet) found but it should be noted that little time has passed since the intervention. After all, first the trainers were trained, then they had to train garment manufacturers, - which takes time to reach substantial numbers -, and then those manufacturers have to apply the new knowledge and improve their market position. The "pay-off" period is hence probably longer than 6 months.

Major Learning

The outputs (96 trainers trained) and outcomes (training other MSEs to improve their production methods resulting in better quality garments and less wastage) have been achieved. The intended impact has been achieved to a certain extent as it is too early for real significant changes to have taken place. Factors which have contributed to the success of this intervention are:

- Training Needs Assessment conducted to help customize the training programme
- Qualified and professional trainers from CITI
- Introduction of relevant methods (block method) and tools

The study also shows a number of things that could be improved.

1. Better monitoring of the identification and selection process

The study has shown that the identification and selection process has not been optimal, resulting in approximately one-third of unintended participants in the TOT. The process has been outsourced by ILO Enter-Growth to consultants (to identify possible garment trainers) and to CITI (selection and training). A more thorough monitoring of this process is needed to avoid any mismatch. Better communication between the ILO district offices and the consultants / CITI may be useful too. For example, Puttalam and Polonnaruwa offices were aware of the limited availability of full-time private sector garment trainers in their districts, yet somehow the selection process continued as if there were no issues. Probably CITI accommodated garment manufacturers since they did not find sufficient number of private sector garment trainers for the training. This has been the case especially in Puttalam and Polonnaruwa districts.

2. A more district-specific and flexible design of the intervention

The Training of Trainers (TOT) intervention has taken place in a similar way in the four districts, despite the fact that the situation in each district varied. The study shows better results and higher impact in Kurunegala, where the business environment is thriving and more private sector trainers are available than in the other 3 districts. Rather than fixing the number of participants at 20 in each district, the intervention could have opted for a more flexible, availability-based design of the intervention in each district.

3. Better adaptation of curriculum to district-specific needs

CITI has conducted a needs assessment assessing the potential trainers' educational qualifications as well as their knowledge on technical subjects such as pattern making, production control, mechanics and design.

The question remaining however, is to what extent they have (been able to) really customized the curriculum based on the assessment. The TNA report remarks that "the variations are almost the same across the districts and that one unique syllabus could be formed for all districts". As a result, the first round of 10-day TOT programmes has been the same in each district. The second round of TOT has accommodated changes, for example in Kurunegala, CITI reduced the machine maintenance time and increased the pattern making time, as per suggestion of the first batch of trainees.

However, a closer look at the TNA report also shows that the trainers' demand for kids' clothing, for example, has been much higher in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa (resp. 78% and 87%) than in Kurunegala (7%) and Puttalam (33%). This seems to have been ignored.

4. Marketing assistance and linkages

The study shows that technical training to improve quality of garments is only one of the MSE needs. Product diversification and marketing strategies are equally important in an effort to strengthen productivity in MSEs. General business management skills would also enhance the quality of the MSEs. The intervention needs to create better linkages with existing BDS providers to assist MSEs in a broader perspective. Also, assistance with business start-up (loans, business planning) will be useful to those who have been trained by the trainers but are still unable to set-up a small business entity. The MSE forum, encouraged by ILO District Managers can play a stronger role in facilitating these kinds of linkages.

5. Follow-up and monitoring

To ensure the trickling down of the TOT to others (multiplier effect), preferably to other MSEs, intense follow-up is needed. CITI trainers were contracted to conduct at least 1 follow-up visit per trained trainer. This has happened in some cases, while in other cases follow-up did not take place. CITI is a Colombo-based organization and when they announced they would come for the follow-up visit, many were not available or did not show up. A more rigorous follow-up by someone from the district (for example by one of the private trainers trained) will probably result in more hands-on assistance to ensure that the TOT knowledge and skills are applied in the intended way. The same can be said for monitoring.

Annex I. TOT Garment Curriculum (by CITI)

| stage | |
|-------|---|
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic knowledge of proper use of pattern making instruments. Tools and equipment Elementary knowledge of the structure of the figure, its growth and development with specific reference • Draft of basic block pattern • Knowledge of Quality Control (theory and practical) • Drafting of skirt block pattern • Style developments • Discuss the quality points of sewn sample |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting of shirt pattern • Style developments • Discuss the quality points of sewn sample |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting of skirt pattern • Style developments • Discuss the quality points of sewn sample |
| 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Machine type and attachments • Knowledge of sewing machine (equipment technology, theory) |
| 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting of Blouse pattern • Style developments • Discuss the quality points of sewn sample |
| 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern grading • Product development |
| 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factory visit (medium / large scale) <p>Exposure to manufacturing technology</p> |