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**Trade Unions using Research to Improve Employment in GPNs**

The Social Observatory Institute (SOI) is a non-governmental organization that researches the behaviour of multinational, national and state-run companies, regarding fundamental labour rights. Those rights are guaranteed mainly by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Core Labour Standards, which deal with freedom of association, collective bargaining, child and forced labour, race and gender discrimination, environment, and health and safety at the workplace.

Created in 1997, SOI has developed over 40 studies on the social and labour behaviour of companies, most of them foreign capital investments. In order to do the reports, a specific methodology was designed, adapted to the Brazilian reality, and incorporates environmental concerns within a framework of corporate social responsibility. Since 2004, SOI has included a production chain perspective in its research, with the aim of better evaluating to what degree the companies contribute toward the improvement of social and labour conditions for its suppliers.

In addition, SOI has worked since October 2005 to consolidate the Latin American Network for the Research on Multinational Companies (RedLat), composed of research institutions and trade unions from seven Latin American countries, with the purpose of raising knowledge regarding multinational behaviour in our continent and to inform trade union activities.