



## THE ISSUE

The fashion industry is among the top five-largest polluting industries producing an environmental impact. The industry's present business model is an obvious contributor of stress on natural resources. If production and consumption of textile and apparel follow their current trajectories, the industry's environmental footprint will continue to expand and negatively impact the planet.

The four most pressing environmental impacts are energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, water use, pollution through chemicals and microplastics, and waste. Annually, the industry accounts for 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions and 20% of global waste water; 85% of textiles end up in landfill or incineration, roughly 21 billion tonnes a year; 24% of insecticides and 11% of pesticides are used by cotton farming despite using only 3% of the world's arable land.

Clothing accounts for 15% (1.02 gha) of Hong Kong's total Ecological Footprint. In this category, the forest area used to sequester CO<sub>2</sub> accounts for 45% (0.46 gha), grazing land for 28% (0.29 gha), and cropland for 23% (0.24 gha). The environmental cost behind apparel production should be addressed along the entire production chain, from raw material production to "last mile" transportation. The use of natural resources includes freshwater and natural fibres such as cotton, wool and hemp. Making these fibres requires the use of productive land that increases our Ecological Footprint.

Global consumption of clothes doubled between 2000 and 2014. Overall, apparel consumption is projected to rise even further, from 62 million tonnes in 2015 to 102 million tonnes in 2030. This projected increase in global fashion consumption will create further environmental stress and risks in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## WHAT WE ARE DOING

To achieve our goals, WWF has launched Making Zero Impact Fashionable, a two-year project that aims to forge a collaborative network of fashion business leaders working together to discuss and explore how to individually and collectively advance and implement sustainability as a core value of business planning, product development, company policy and operational practices.

The project builds business cases of driving sustainability across fashion supply chain through 10 different engagement activities:

- Engagement of fashion business leaders, identifying organizations that have influence in the industry and support the sustainability agenda;
- Supply chain climate-resilient screenings, to profile suppliers carbon emissions profile, and provide recommendations on their annual electricity consumption; climate risks and corporate/product carbon footprint; and GHG management policy and strategy;

- Low carbon supply chain training workshops, covering climate change threats and opportunities, and low-carbon sustainable production;
- Onsite walkthrough assessments for energy hotspots, greenhouse gas management and carbon accounting, and sustainable business practices;
- LCMP memberships and verification, to sustainable long-term carbon emissions reduction at factories;
- LOOP memberships and verification, to drive system changes and employees' low-carbon behaviour at offices;
- Encourage dialogue for sustainable innovation among startups and fashion companies to promote sustainable innovation;
- A social media campaign to engage the public and raise awareness of sustainable fashion;
- Public engagement on clothing labels, to fill the knowledge gap and explore the relationship between a well-informed buying decision and the willingness to wear the item for a longer period of time;

A sustainable cotton ranking report, examining the penetration of sustainable cotton use in Hong Kong, including social, economic and environmental challenges, and to provide a baseline measure against which future performance can be measured.

## **OUR GOAL**

WWF-Hong Kong's Making Zero Impact Fashionable initiative aims to generate new ideas and solutions to address the pressing challenges of the fashion industry, and reduce the environmental impact from the entire textile and apparel supply chain. This covers business planning, product development, company policy and operational practices, including:

- adopting measures to reduce their carbon emissions;
- implementing sustainability performance monitoring tools and advisory services to facilitate their suppliers to start the low carbon journey; and,
- improving environmental performance and/or ESG reporting

As a leading production centre and a global sourcing hub for apparel, Hong Kong is well - poised to act as a convener bringing brand owners, designers, buyers, manufacturers, retailers and consumers together to address the issue of sustainable consumption and production (SCP).

By engaging companies to implement sustainable practices throughout their business operations, and engaging forward-looking leaders to reduce carbon emissions, WWF aims to help consumers reduce their clothing consumption, and direct them towards clothes that are made with more environmentally-friendly materials such as a mix of recycled fibres with organic cotton, and support a circular economy.

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