

Fashion Must Close the Gap Between Sustainability Targets and Tracking



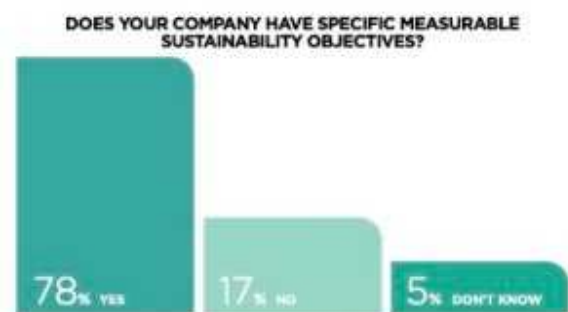
[FASCINADORA/ADOBE]

Over the last decade, sustainability has gone from an oft-mentioned buzzword to a business imperative. The fashion industry recognizes the need for sustainable change. However, when it comes to sustainability, what companies say and what they are currently doing are two very different things.

Sourcing Journal and AlixPartners' recent joint 2022 Survey Report, Fashion in Focus: New Norms and Paradigm Shifts, found that although 78 percent of brand, retailer and wholesaler respondents note that their companies have specific and measurable sustainability goals, only 19 percent are actively tracking and analyzing carbon data. The resulting dearth of available data is holding companies back from making meaningful progress as well as demonstrating their impact.

"The biggest barrier to change has been access to data, metrics and transparency around sustainability initiatives, which can often answer

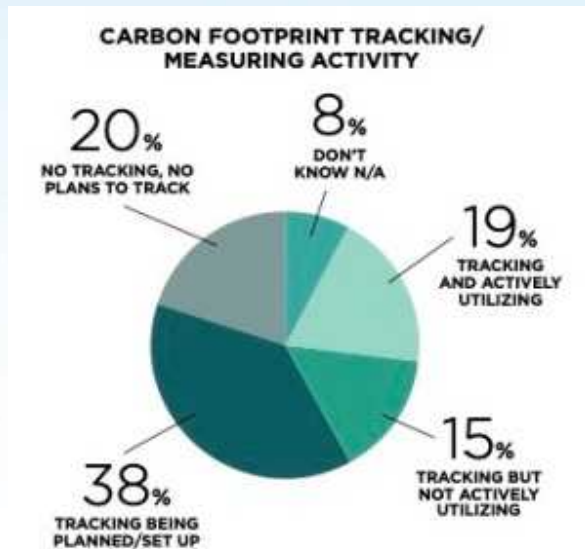
the question of cost versus benefits," said Matt Clark, managing director at AlixPartners. "Retailers need the right tools and measures to embed new ways of working and ensure sustainability becomes 'business as usual' across their value chains."



Despite a lack of widespread tracking that would indicate their exact progress, 56 percent of respondents believe they are either on target (28 percent) or ahead of target (28 percent) toward meeting their goals.

Although there is a widespread push to enact targets, the industry is deploying disparate tactics in service of these goals. When asked to select up to three actions being taken by their company to cut their carbon footprint, the top solution was using recycled and sustainable raw materials, mentioned by 56 percent. Next was swapping to sustainable packaging (46 percent), followed by reducing corporate travel (37 percent) and positioning production closer to markets (31 percent).

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Process improvements—such as virtual design and sampling—could save not only time but also resources and costs. However, adoption is lagging with just 48 percent using virtual design tools. “We no longer have the luxury of time or ignorance to fly hundreds of thousands of samples and even production volumes all over the world,” said Sonia Lapinsky, managing director at AlixPartners. “Consumers will notice and respond with their dollars.”

Partly due to these cost efficiencies, environmentally friendly solutions don’t need to cost retailers or consumers more money. Showing the potential for lower priced low-impact goods, intimate apparel producer Gelmart introduced a line of bras for its Kindly label at Walmart that uses a sugarcane-derived material for the cup. This innovation comes with big box-style pricing, making it accessible. “For sustainable practices to really be sustainable, the impact needs to occur at the mass level,”

noted Yossi Nasser, founding partner of Gelmart and Full Stride Ventures.

Instead of treating sustainability like a siloed endeavor, it must be integrated into all aspects of the business. Whether firms are concerned with meeting compliance requirements as more regulations come down the pipeline, or if they are working toward internally set goals, it’s more important than ever to go beyond talk with action. Stakeholders—including consumers, NGOs and regulatory bodies—are watching.

“When it comes to day-to-day decision making, retailers must consider the implications of their sustainability goals not just on long-term strategic planning but also on the yearly budgeting process,” said Anita Wu, director at AlixPartners. “Sustainability doesn’t need to come at a cost but may require a shift in priorities to allow companies to meet their carbon reduction goals.”

Link

<https://sourcingjournal.com/sustainability/sustainability-news/fashion-sustainability-targets-tracking-gap-alixpartners-walmart-gelmart-411365/>

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Some of the World's Biggest Brands Just Signed the Pakistan Accord



[IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN ON NOV. 11, 2014, PAKISTANI EMPLOYEES WORK IN A TEXTILE FACTORY IN KARACHI.-ASIF HASSAN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES]

It's official: Bestseller, C&A, H&M Group, Otto Group, Calvin Klein parent PVH Corp. and Zara owner Inditex have signed the Pakistan Accord, the first expansion of the International Accord for Health and Safety in the Garment Industry beyond Bangladesh's borders.

Now they're urging the rest of the industry to join its "collective commitment" to boost safety standards at supplier factories in the South Asian nation.

"The International Accord aims to protect the health and safety of millions of workers while helping the industry achieve sustainable growth in exports," the brands—all of them members of the International Accord's steering committee—wrote in a joint statement Monday. "With the signing of the Pakistan Accord and our brands'

commitment to this new safety program, we are renewing our commitment to a long-term sourcing relationship with Pakistan."

Collectively, the International Accord's 187 brand signatories source more than \$2.6 billion worth of garments and textiles from Pakistan. Brands will have to sign up separately for the program, which opened on Jan. 16 for an interim term of three years.

"The Pakistan Accord provides an opportunity both to increase the visibility of the efforts already made by many manufacturers to invest in fire and building safety measures in recent years and deepen and expand them throughout Pakistan's garment and textile sector, making it an increasingly attractive option for buyers across the globe," the brands said.

Like the International Accord—and the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh that preceded it—the agreement is legally binding, meaning that signatories must abide by its mandates or face legal consequences for not doing so.

Ready-made factories aside, the Pakistan Accord also covers textile mills, though the

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latter will be phased in once the nature of the signatories' business relationships with their supply chain partners becomes clearer.

The Pakistan Accord isn't simply a cut-and-paste of the International or even Bangladesh Accord, said Felicity Tapsell, head of responsible sourcing at Bestseller, which counts the country among its top five sourcing destinations. Multi-stakeholder collaboration, based on the "specific context" of individual sourcing countries, is necessary to "secure occupational health and safety for all textile workers," she said.

But the outlines are the same. Like the International Accord, Pakistan's version will require independent safety inspections to identify, remediate and monitor fire, electrical, structural and boiler hazards. It will establish safety committee training and worker safety awareness programs, create an independent complaints mechanism and commit to local capacity-building. Transparency, as before, will be a central tenet.

"Workers learn how to protect themselves and make their jobs safer. They are given a voice and their rights are strengthened," said Pablo von Waldenfels, director of corporate responsibility at Tchibo, which signed the Pakistan Accord last week. "This is a great success for our industry and all partners involved."

The idea is for the International Accord's steering committee to assume responsibility for the Pakistan Accord's overall management until a national governance body consisting of industry, brands, trade unions and others can materialize. In 2020, for instance, the functions of the Accord Office in Bangladesh transitioned to the tripartite Ready-made Garment Sustainability Council, or RSC.

Pakistan bears the scars of its own Rana Plaza. Six months before the building collapse outside Dhaka killed 1,134 garment workers and injured thousands more in April 2013, a fire at a Karachi textile complex called Ali Enterprises claimed the lives of more than 250 employees. As with its Bangladeshi counterpart, auditors had just given the building a clean bill of health.

In the years since, voluntary auditing systems have continued to fail to protect the nation's workers, according to the Clean Clothes Campaign, which accused Bestseller, C&A, H&M Group and Inditex in September of "willfully obstructing" the Pakistan expansion with "delay after delay" on a solid deal, though the companies themselves dismissed the allegations.

In a survey of nearly 600 garment workers that the labor rights alliance commissioned in Pakistan in 2021, roughly 85 percent reported that they lacked access to properly enclosed stairwells that could deliver them to safety in the

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event of a fire. One-fifth of workers said that their workplace didn't conduct fire drills or school them about emergency escape routes and exits.

Workers at factories producing for H&M Group and Bestseller reported explosions and exposure to electrical discharge and harmful substances, while others at H&M Group and Inditex suppliers said they witnessed fires at their workplace. A poisonous gas leak that killed four workers at a factory that sews jeans for H&M Group last January might have been prevented if the facility had a workers' health and safety committee that operated in tandem with an International Accord-like health complaints mechanism, the Clean Clothes Campaign said.

KiK, the German discount chain that was Ali Enterprise's primary customer, committed to a Pakistan Accord before it was unveiled on Dec. 14 by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with industry stakeholders, including representatives from labor unions and the Employers' Federation of Pakistan the week before.

"This alliance has led to an entire industrial sector in a developing country being transformed from the ground up. Since the Accord was established, there have been no major disasters in the textile industry in Bangladesh. The aim of the Accord in Pakistan is to build on this successful model," KiK CEO

Patrick Zahn said at the time.

Now the biggest questions are how many other brands will follow suit and whether there is an appetite to develop comparable programs in countries similarly plagued by fires and other industrial disasters. Factory fires, risk-monitoring firm Resilinc reported last week, were among the leading supply chain disruptions for 2022 with 3,609 alerts and an 85 percent year-over-year increase.

"We are heartened that the groundbreaking Accord program will now come to Pakistan, where it is urgently needed. All brands sourcing from Pakistan should embrace this agreement," Ineke Zeldenrust, international coordinator of the Clean Clothes Campaign, said in December, when the Pakistan Accord was announced. "It is important to note that garment and textile workers in Pakistan had to wait a decade for this progress. We hope workers in other key garment-producing countries won't have to wait as long."

Link

<https://sourcingjournal.com/topics/labor/pakistan-accord-zara-inditex-calvin-klein-pvh-hm-bestseller-garment-worker-safety-411239/>

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Target Recalls Weighted Blankets After 2 Children Perish



[TARGET ISSUED A RECALL FOR MORE THAN 200,000 WEIGHTED BLANKETS AFTER TWO CHILDREN DIED FROM ASPHYXIATION. PAUL WEAVER/SOPA IMAGES/LIGHTROCKET VIA GETTY IMAGES]

Target has issued a recall for more than 200,000 weighted blankets after two children died from asphyxiation.

“Two small children tragically died after they zipped themselves into a Target brand ‘Pillowfort’ Weighted Blanket and could not escape the blanket cover,” Richard Trumka of the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) said in a statement. “In three separate, additional incidents, other children also became entrapped within the blanket cover but survived.”

A 4-year-old girl and a 6-year-old girl reportedly became entrapped in the cover of the weighted blanket and died due to asphyxia in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in April. Target has received four reports of children becoming entrapped in these weighted blankets, including the two fatalities.

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"We send our deepest condolences and support to the family that lost their loved ones. As soon as we became aware of the situation, we acted quickly to begin removing Pillowfort Weighted Blankets from our assortment and have pulled all of these items from sale," Joe Unger, a spokesperson for Target, said to Sourcing Journal. "In cooperation with the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the product manufacturer, we are also initiating a full product recall and are in the process of alerting consumers. If a guest owns any of these products, they should immediately stop using them and return them to Target for a full refund."

The blankets weigh six pounds, measure 60 inches long and 40 inches wide and have a removable, waterproof, washable cover. The blankets come in eight prints or colors, including unicorn white, space navy, pink, blue, gray, buffalo plaid red, blue constellation and unicorn pink. The blankets were sold from December 2018 through September 2022 for \$40. Target exclusively sold the recalled weighted blankets at stores nationwide and online.

Trumka further said that the department store chain worked quickly with the CPSC to issue a "swift and innovative" recall. But Trumka abstained from voting to approve the recall as it contains a provision he doesn't believe should exist: a receipt is required to receive a full remedy of a cash refund.

"This requirement is particularly inappropriate because Pillowfort is a brand only sold at Target stores—it could not have been bought anywhere else," he said. "Our goal is to get as many unreasonably dangerous products out of people's homes as possible. Unnecessary receipt requirements stand in the way of that goal. I expect that future recalls will not contain receipt requirements."

Target's recall came one day after Crate & Barrel recalled 280 of its Thornhill cribs due to the potential for falls and entrapment. According to an announcement from the CPSC, the crib's mattress support pins can come loose or not fit properly, causing the mattress to fall. In November, TJX, the parent company of TJ Maxx, Marshalls and HomeGoods in the United States, issued a recall of Mittal International baby blankets as the threads in the chenille weave blankets can come loose and detach, posing choking, entrapment and strangulation hazards.

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[THE RECALLED PILLOWFORT WEIGHTED BLANKET IN UNICORN WHITE. COURTESY OF THE CPSC.]

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