

SUSTAINABLE CLOTHING ROADMAP



PROGRESS
REPORT
2011




defra

Department for Environment
Food and Rural Affairs

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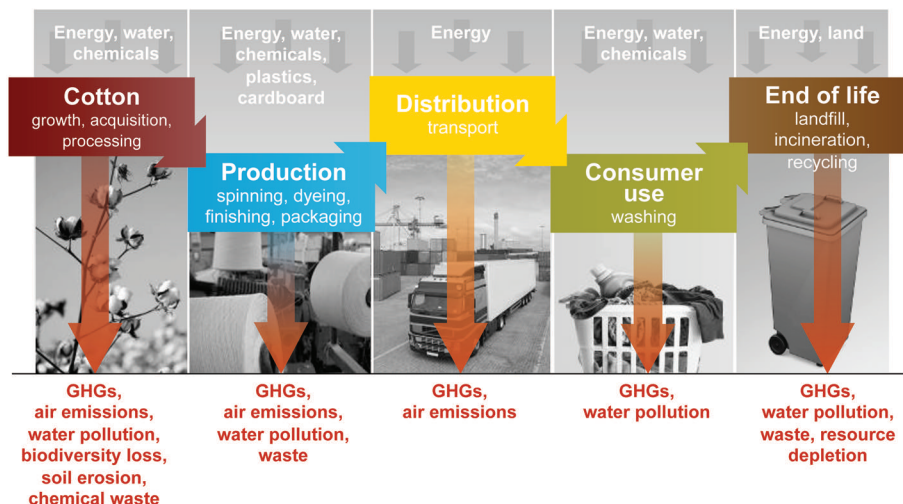
INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Clothing Roadmap launched in 2007, with the aim of improving the sustainability of clothing across its lifecycle, from the crops that are grown to make the fabrics, to the design and manufacture of the garment, retail, use and end of life.

An ambitious aim, but one which is necessary because clothing, whilst an economic success story globally worth £500 billion, has a significant environmental and social footprint across its supply chain. This is exacerbated by high consumption levels, especially in the developed world. Led by Defra, and working closely with sector experts, the roadmap is based on the co-ordinated action of key clothing and fashion stakeholders – the people best placed to make effective improvements throughout their operations. From April this year, Defra's delivery body, the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), will formally take over the running of the roadmap.

The UN definition of the term 'sustainability' refers to 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. Relating the concept of sustainability to clothing means that ideally this would be clothing which meets the needs of today's consumers, and is also made, transported, sold, used and disposed of in ways which do not adversely impact people or the planet – now or at any time in the future. In practice, achieving this is not straightforward. It involves trade-offs between different impacts and working out how to prioritise improvements.

The environmental impacts involved in the manufacture of clothing vary significantly. For example, cotton growth involves significant water use, toxicity from fertiliser, pesticide and herbicide use, whereas production of synthetic fibres involves the generation of GHG emissions from the processing of fossil fuels. For all fibres the dyeing and finishing processes can involve heavy water use resulting in hazardous waste from pre-treatment chemicals. In the use phase, the energy consumed in laundering during the water heating and air heating in the tumble drying also have significant environmental impacts.



Environmental impacts across the lifecycle
Example: cotton

When the roadmap was set up, it was understood that there is no simple straightforward answer on how to tackle these issues and that government alone could not provide a solution. Instead, the concept of the roadmap process is about bringing together relevant sector expertise to understand the full picture and develop co-ordinated action.

In the UK, around two million tonnes of clothing are purchased per annum, with the fast/discount fashion sector (characterised by low cost, short lifetime garments) making up one-fifth of the UK market. We discard approximately one million tonnes of unwanted clothing a year – 50% of which ends up in landfill. As 90% of UK clothing is imported, our activities have a significant overseas “footprint”, particularly in India, China and other developing countries.

We are all part of the problem and, more encouragingly, can be part of the solution. Only now are we beginning to learn just how interconnected we are; that small actions in one part of the world can have big consequences in others.

The Sustainable Clothing Roadmap has a wide remit in order to ensure that the relevant data is gathered and that the concept of sustainable clothing is understood in its fullest sense. As the roadmap develops, it is tightening its focus and working to agree actions to tackle a series of more defined ‘hot spots’ within the clothing lifecycle. The two current task groups are

focusing on reuse and recycling and on clothes cleaning, and we plan to move on to tackle other ‘hot spot’ areas.

This progress report outlines what has been achieved since 2007 in terms of our understanding of the concept of sustainable clothing, through evidence gathering and stakeholder engagement. A number of the actions which form part of the roadmap’s ‘action plan’ have been included with the aim of demonstrating some of our achievements and sharing best practice.

If you would like more information on how to get involved in the Sustainable Clothing Roadmap please email products.policy@defra.gov.uk or take a look at our website www.defra.co.uk and search ‘sustainable clothing roadmap’.

“In the UK, around two million tonnes of clothing are purchased per annum...”



THE ROADMAP PROCESS



THE ROADMAP PROCESS

“The textile industry is one of the industries with the longest and most complicated industrial chains of the manufacturing industry. It involves actors from the agricultural, chemical fibre, textile, and apparel industries, retail and services sector, and waste treatment. The industry is fragmented and heterogeneous, dominated by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which account for more than 80% of the market.”*

The Sustainable Clothing Roadmap is an attempt to improve the environmental and social performance of clothing consumed in the UK, building on existing initiatives and by coordinating action by key clothing supply chain stakeholders. It is one of ten pilot roadmaps that were set up by Defra in 2007 (examples of other roadmaps are fish, milk, windows and televisions). Product roadmapping is a collaborative process for understanding and tackling the environmental impacts of a product, throughout the various stages in its lifecycle – from raw materials through to production, retail and distribution, use and end of life. The roadmapping process has four stages:

- Review evidence: The first stage is to look at the impacts of product across its lifecycle and the action that is already being taken, put the two together and highlight any gaps.
- Engage stakeholders: We then put together a group of stakeholders from across the product lifecycle – manufacturers, retailers, users and waste managers.
- Action plan: We work with stakeholders to develop an action plan – including actions by government and industry at all stages of the supply chain – to address the gaps highlighted by the evidence study.
- Implement and evaluate: Finally, we implement the action plan to improve the sustainability of the product. We then monitor and evaluate what it delivers, and what we have learnt about the road-mapping process.

This report is an overview of what has been achieved in these four stages so far – detailing the evidence gathered and drawing out some of the actions being undertaken by stakeholders. The Clothing Roadmap is now at the implementation and evaluation stage, having produced the first action plan in 2009, and an update in 2010. The roadmap continues to develop as new members join the process and the task groups work to develop future actions.

STAGE 1: Review Evidence

Defra and other organisations have commissioned a number of evidence projects to help inform all roadmap members and the wider clothing sector, and identify potential actions. Most of this evidence work started early on in the roadmap process, some are ongoing. For ease of reference, the studies have been grouped together in the section below, the majority of them are also actions within the roadmap’s Action Plan.

The evidence studies are detailed in lifecycle order below.

Mapping of evidence of sustainable development impacts that occur in life cycles of clothing (2007)

As Defra’s first research under the Sustainable Clothing Roadmap, this evidence study undertook a review of existing literature on the life cycle of clothing. The review determined the overall social and environmental impact of the clothing life cycle along with any existing interventions and made further recommendations for improving the overall sustainability of clothing. The research assessed the robustness, uncertainties and identified gaps in the evidence of impacts. It made recommendations on further research required on life cycle impacts of clothing. Finally, it assessed the effectiveness of existing interventions to improve the sustainability performance of clothing and made recommendations on where UK interventions could make a significant improvement.

*Environmental Improvement Potentials of Textiles, European Commission Report – report pending publication from the European Commission Joint Research Centre, Institute for Prospective Technological Studies.

Ninety per cent of clothing consumed in the UK is imported. Encouraging environmental and ethical improvements across the international clothing supply chains feeding the UK is essential to improve the sustainability of the clothing we wear in the UK. As India, after China, is the second largest manufacturer of clothing imported into the country, Defra has funded two clothing demonstration projects under the department's Sustainable Development Dialogues Process, which tie in with the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development. The Dialogues were established as a means to accelerate delivery of commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Sustainable Design: Promoting Sustainable Indian Textiles (2010)

The Shared Talent India project, led by the Centre for Sustainable Fashion, explored and shared knowledge on sustainable design practice. In India, the industry is a large net foreign exchange earner and a major employment provider. From poverty wages to water and pesticide use in cotton farming, there are a wide range of challenging sustainability issues related to the country's industry. However, there are also growing numbers of suppliers developing better practices. This project, involving designers, suppliers of Indian textiles, buyers and undergraduates from the London College of Fashion, Pearl Academy of Fashion Delhi and the Amsterdam Fashion Institute aimed to build capacity and explore market opportunities for using more sustainable Indian textiles. The project developed an online sourcing toolkit and textile catalogue to help UK-based fashion businesses develop productive relationships with Indian suppliers and successfully source sustainable textiles.

For more information visit:
www.sharedtalentindia.com

Sustainable Manufacture: Eco-efficiency of Indian Dyehouses (2010)

This project focused on demonstrating the environmental and business case for eco-efficiency in Indian dyehouses that supply the UK clothing market. Dyeing is recognised as being a high impact process that consumes large quantities of water, energy and chemicals, and the dyeing industry is known to be one of the major global polluters. The project selected three dyehouses of differing abilities to work with in order to reduce the amount of water, energy and chemicals used to dye their products. Motivating dyehouse staff to improve processes and data gathering were challenges, but a key finding was that it is possible to significantly reduce costs and environmental impacts by simple, low cost actions. In order to maximise progress though, some capital investment is necessary. Three best practice seminars were held in India to share the findings with the wider dyeing industry.



Sustainable Manufacture: The Role and Business Case for Existing and Emerging Fibres in Sustainable Clothing (2010)

The aim of this evidence project was to evaluate the environmental and social impacts of existing and emerging clothing fibres and their market potential into the future. This was done to determine the business case for clothing fibres and fabrics from a sustainability perspective. The intent was to provide industry with clarity on the environmental and social impacts of fibres/fabrics to enable increased use of those with sound sustainability credentials and economic viability. A number of key data gaps and inconsistencies in reporting of the environmental and social impacts of fibres emerged during the project which prevented an accurate comparison of different fibre types.

Thus the indicative ranking of fibres by environmental impact presented in the study must be treated with caution, as at best it only represents a high level indication. The study highlights a number of evidence gaps requiring further research for more accurate findings.

Use: Reducing the Environmental Impact of Clothes Cleaning (2009)

Defra commissioned this project because existing evidence shows that the impacts of the clothes cleaning stage of the clothing lifecycle has high environmental impacts and that there is further potential for improvement beyond existing interventions. The project aim was to identify and analyse the options to reduce the energy, water and chemicals intensity of clothes cleaning. Information on current cleaning methods was collected and the environmental impacts of these methods (including potential trade-offs) assessed. Six aspects of clothes cleaning were considered:

- Fibre and fabric characteristics e.g. anti crease or anti bacterial coatings
- Washing and drying appliances
- Low/non-solvent dry cleaning
- Detergents and their packaging
- Sustainable building design
- Final assembly of garments and durability

The evidence confirmed that the environmental impacts of clothes cleaning are significant with energy consumption and associated GHG emissions from the heating of water (washer) and air (dryer) often quoted as approximately 80% of the use phase energy impacts. Eutrophication and other toxicity impacts due to washing detergents are the other significant impacts. Taking into account consumer behaviour and societal trends, the project found that the best options to reduce the impacts of clothes cleaning would be through awareness campaigns and regulatory/legislative interventions. Defra set up a Clothes Cleaning Task Group to come up with joint actions in this area (see page 10).



Use: Public Understanding of Sustainable Clothing (2008)

This research sets out people's current understanding of sustainable clothing and explores their response to behaviours that may mitigate impacts of their clothes buying, maintenance and disposal. Using focus group methods and follow up sessions, the research explored: people's aspirations in relation to clothing - what would they like to buy and wear, and what might nudge their aspirations towards a more sustainable picture; assumptions of 'good clothing'; understanding of sustainable clothing; and expectations of government and industry. In order to raise awareness of the sustainability impacts of clothing among the general public, the research advised a number of strategies. These included the provision of better labelling on the source of products, exploring options to increase recovery of clothing through 'take back' schemes, and building on the 'wash at 30°C' campaign.

End of life: Maximising Reuse and Recycling of UK Clothing and Textiles (2009)

This project reported comprehensive and robust data on the quality and quantity of post consumer clothing and textile waste in the UK. It presented and evaluated strategies for increasing reuse and recycling in order to divert them from landfill. This included a detailed assessment of the barriers and opportunities to maximise reuse and recycling, the technical and economic feasibility of different options, the infrastructure requirements, and examples of best practice from overseas. A pilot scale trial to test textile waste suitability for reuse/recycling was conducted for a representative sample of households in Birmingham. The study recommends key interventions in order to optimise technologies and develop markets for clothing and textiles items and their constituent materials, thus diverting more from landfill.

STAGE 2: Engage Stakeholders

Although theoretically, this is the second stage of the roadmap, stakeholders were engaged right from the start of the process. Those who expressed interest in undertaking commitments were invited to participate on the steering groups for the evidence projects mentioned above.

Nearly 300 stakeholder organisations along the supply chain of UK consumed clothing have participated in the roadmap to date, including clothing retailers, fibre/fabric/garment manufacturers, suppliers, clothing reuse and recycling organisations, charities, industry associations, government, NGOs, practitioners, academia and support organisations.

Of those 300, around 40 have committed to take action. They are a diverse group - including large and small organisations, businesses, Government and civil society, mainstream brands and sustainability specialists.

Different organisations face different challenges, and are at different stages of their journey towards sustainability. The actions detailed overleaf illustrate this. Some organisations are just entering this arena, whilst others have been working on it for a significant time.

STAGE 3: Action Planning and Implementation

Based on the evidence obtained, the roadmap participants agreed on five key action areas:

- 1) Improving environmental performance across the supply chain
- 2) Consumption trends and behaviour
- 3) Awareness, media, education and networks
- 4) Creating market drivers
- 5) Traceability across the supply chain (ethics, trade and environment)

The Action Plans of 2009 and 2010 were grouped under these headings.

A Steering Group monitors progress in delivering actions, and at the end of the task, a case study demonstrating evidence of achievement is required.

Ranging from reducing garment packaging, to developing a clothing take back process, to raising awareness of sustainable clothing, the actions cover a wide spectrum of activity. As different stakeholders are at different stages of their journey towards sustainability, some actions are first steps, some demonstrate best practice, and some involve the development of cutting edge technology.

This next section of the report outlines some of these activities in the five key action areas outlined above. Symbols have been added as a guide, showing what types of actions stakeholders at different stages can adopt and develop.

Quick Wins:



Good Practice:



Trailblazers:



Action Area 1: Improving environmental performance across the supply chain

This area covers a range of activities such as sustainable design, fibres and fabrics and maximising reuse, recycling and end of life management. The majority of members' actions fall within this action area.

The new actions which have been added in this area since the previous action plan are:

The Better Cotton Initiative's action to engage retailers representing 15% of cotton grown globally in their Better Cotton System through BCI membership by 2012.

John Lewis has committed to remove polystyrene from the inside of their packaging from 2012 and to roll out product labelling on John Lewis garments with a save energy message – 30°C wash and line dry recommendation.

Design Tools



Nike developed the Considered Apparel Index to score the environmental attributes of its apparel in 2007. The index is used by designers early in the product creation process to help inform design and development decisions to reduce the environmental impacts related to materials, manufacturing waste, and garment treatments. In late 2010, Nike launched the Environmental Apparel Design Tool (EADT), which is a web-based version of the Index. It was developed primarily to enable other companies to understand Nike's approach to scoring apparel products and to provide a working tool to score their products. The EADT was tested and well received by a number of retailers and brands. The related Materials Analysis Tool (MAT) drives 60% of a garment's score in Nike's Considered Apparel Index. MAT uses materials impact data related to four key environmental impact areas – energy/CO₂-eq, water /land use intensity, chemistry, and waste – to assess approximately 60 footwear and apparel materials on a relative scale of 1 to 100. The apparel materials portion of MAT was also released in late 2010 with the EADT.

The Clothes Exchange



The **Oxfam** and **M&S** Clothes Exchange was launched in 2008 and encourages people to donate their unwanted clothes. The Exchange is designed to raise money for Oxfam's work and to reduce the one million tonnes of clothing sent to landfill each year. Anyone donating an item of M&S clothing to Oxfam receives a £5 voucher to use on their next purchase of £35 or more in store. Revenues generated from the sale of donated garments provide funding for Oxfam's work on poverty around the world. Since the launch, more than three million garments have been diverted from landfill into reuse and an extra £3 million has been raised for Oxfam. The scheme has recently been extended to cover soft furnishings.

Uniform Reuse Trial



This trial, carried out by the **Centre for Reuse and Remanufacture** and completed in 2009, set out to find ways of improving the reuse and recycling options for corporate wear through practical research and the development of an educational resource. Recovery of corporate wear in the UK currently operates on a relatively small scale, at less than 5%. The main barriers to reuse and recycling include heterogeneous fibre composition, construction and garment designs which inhibit disassembly. Corporate clothing reuse is often hindered by security and corporate image issues due to logos being difficult and costly to remove. As such, corporate wear from high level security sectors (such as transport and public services) is often security-shredded and disposed of to landfill. An online resource to educate industry and raise awareness of the opportunities available can be found at: www.uniformreuse.co.uk.

Case Study: Royal Mail Group

Key Facts:

- RMG employs 1% of the UK working population
- RMG sends less than 1% of corporate uniform to landfill

One of RMG's CSR targets is a focus on ethical sourcing and waste disposal of corporate wear. The organisation has a wide range of garments for employees, including casual wear, tailored career wear, high performance wear, footwear and associated products. There are between 150,000 and 170,000 compulsory uniform employees within the Royal Mail Group and they need to cater for a wide range of sizes. When the employee has finished with a garment, it is sorted initially for de-branding, which involves cutting the label off the garment. This can damage the garment and render it unusable, in which case the garments may be entered into recycling systems (and remanufacturing process – depending on the fibre content) or landfill if non-biodegradable. All remaining products are then sent for processing, mainly for use in seat mouldings for the automotive industry. When asked what they would recommend to other companies with similar aims, Royal Mail's principal response was "traceability" – most companies understand that it is vital that the full supply chain can be effectively monitored, yet they often fail to consider the inclusion of end-of-life management. They also recommend considering sustainability issues at the design stage. This can include minimising waste in cuts, using sustainable and ethically sourced fabrics, and considering what options exist for end-of-life management.

Action on Packaging



A number of the sustainable clothing roadmap members have committed to take action on reducing the packaging involved with their garments. **George at Asda** has made both financial and environmental savings by restricting the use of garment shrouds to light and delicate items, it has also changed the way garments are hung during the transportation process. In the past year, **Marks and Spencer** has increased the number of clothing hangers collected for re-use or recycling to 133 million, with 76% being re-used and the remainder recycled. **Sainsbury's** has committed to reducing clothing packaging by 33% by 2013 and **Tesco** aims to increase the amount of their packaging made from sustainable raw materials with the target of having all paper and board from 100% FSC or similar sustainably managed sources by 2012.

Also under this action area, two task groups have been created to develop and agree further collaborative actions.

Clothes Cleaning Task Group

The group formed in July 2010 and has focused on the key issues identified by the evidence study 'Reducing the environmental impact of clothes cleaning' namely;

- wash at 30°
- line drying
- wash at full load
- spin speed
- dosage

The task group on clothes cleaning is made up of representatives from across the value chain, including manufacturers, retailers and government. Discussions within the group have led to the conclusion that the two areas where collaborative action by industry could have the most influence on reducing the environmental impact of clothes cleaning were line-drying and wash at 30°.

The next step for the group is developing collaborative action to further the take up of washing at 30°. George at Asda, Sainsbury's, Marks and Spencer and Tesco have all taken action to put this message on their clothes labelling. Although great strides have been made, for example 21% of consumers now wash at 30° compared with 2% in 2002, the group is committed to improving these figures further. A key challenge ahead lays in the successful communication of the wash at 30° message – so that it becomes normal behaviour.

Reuse and Recycling Task Group

This group formed in September 2010, in response to the evidence developed on UK clothing reuse and recycling. The primary objective is to develop collective actions to which a number of organisations can contribute as these are likely to have a greater national impact than individual actions. It aims to achieve this by:

- improving collection and separation of reusable and recyclable clothing;
- undertaking market development activities, including understanding market operation, developing good practice and techniques; and
- liaising with other industry member and interest groups to promote collections and uptake of reused and recycled clothing.

The group includes manufacturers, retailers, brands, collectors, recyclers and government representatives. Work focuses on clothing and excludes carpets. The group will also address the balance of quality of collected clothing with the volume collected and is aware that increasing collections will result in a greater amount of clothing suitable only for recycling. It will be important, therefore, to develop separation techniques and outlets markets for recycled products. The group will also cover the development of markets for different grades of recycle.

Action Area 2: Consumption trends and behaviour

Action under this area relates mainly to Defra-led research on public understanding of sustainable clothing and raising consumer awareness of the issues involved.

Defra has also been developing webpages on the environment section of the Direct Gov website advising consumers on how they can reduce the environmental footprint of their clothing consumption. See the section on 'Clothing: greener choices' at www.direct.gov.uk for more information.

The 'perfect T-shirt'



When the **Continental Clothing Company** set out to create the 'perfect t-shirt', the aim was to consider all the impacts on the workforce, local economy, environment and climate change, whilst delivering a commercially viable and desirable product offering on a mass scale. The guiding principles were the complete traceability and transparency of the supply chain, and best practice at every stage. Continental Clothing became a pilot partner with the Carbon Trust's product footprinting and labelling programme, working towards the development of the footprinting methodology for textile products. The company then extended the calculations to include screen-printing, mail-order retailing, consumer use and disposal, thus completing the first full life cycle analysis using the PAS2050 Carbon Footprint methodology. The footprinting study and analysis pinpointed the GHG hotspots throughout the manufacturing process, from choice of fibres, fabric and garment construction, through to the wet processing, accessorising, screen printing, to packaging and transportation/distribution. The study provided vital information to the designers, logistics managers and marketers, in order to effectively control and reduce the impact on climate change. By switching to wind energy at their India manufacturing plant, they achieved a 90% reduction in carbon footprint compared to an identical product manufactured using conventional energy sources. The T-shirt carbon footprint was reduced from 7kgCO₂e down to 0.7kgCO₂e.

Image: Michael Blann

Action Area 3: Awareness, media, education and networks

An important element in the work of the Sustainable Clothing Roadmap has been in raising awareness of the environmental and social impacts of clothing. A number of participants hold annual conferences and exhibitions with a sustainable clothing theme. Raising the profile of these issues amongst consumers, retailers and manufacturers is an ongoing aim of the roadmap process.



Fashioning the Future



The **Centre for Sustainable Fashion** at the London College of Fashion, set up a Masters degree in fashion and the environment in 2008. The course provides students with the knowledge and skills to use design to develop positive change in the ecological, social and cultural impacts relating to fashion. Teaching and learning tools on the topic of sustainability are being developed for undergraduate fashion based courses. Online resources, workshops and one to one sessions to inform and grow fashion businesses' capability to respond to ethical, environmental and cultural concerns and to find new opportunities for sustainable practice are also being developed.

Cotton Made in Africa



Environmental damage, drinking water depletion and soil exploitation have serious consequences for poor farmers. The objective of the **Cotton made in Africa** initiative (part of the Aid by Trade Foundation) is to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers whilst protecting the environment and supporting social progress. For example, long term maintenance of soil fertility is much more likely to happen once smallholder farmers have reached a level of income, food security and technical ability to allow them to 'invest' into their acreage over a number of planting cycles rather than to live from hand to mouth. Income and education are thus important determinants not only for social progress, but also for environmental sustainability in rural Africa. The Aid by Trade Foundation and its partners are providing smallholder training to increase productivity and income through sustainable farming methods. It is also involved in community projects to improve quality of, and access to, health, education, and in payment of Cotton made in Africa dividends to add to farming income. So far, CmiA's production standards have been verified with over 250,000 farmers in Burkina Faso, Benin, Ivory Coast, Malawi and Zambia. Cotton made in Africa finances its support to social development and sustainable cotton growing by a small licensing fee, levied on retailers.

Schools Clothing Collection



The Salvation Army Trading Company (SATCoL), collects around 3,000 tonnes of usable or recyclable textiles a month, less than 2.5 tonnes of that is sent to landfill. As part of its textile recycling work, SATCoL launched an educational and practical clothing collection scheme specifically designed for schools. The project developed a DVD to be shown in school assemblies and classrooms, with Chris Tarrant and Gary Lineker teaching children the benefits of recycling. The information produced focuses on the reasons for recycling of textiles, how recycling works and what happens to clothing unsuitable for reuse. SATCoL has also worked with a number of schools to provide collection bags that the children are encouraged to fill with donations before they're collected, helping to facilitate textile recycling in a practical way for young people.

Courses in Colour



As around 90% of clothing consumed in the UK is imported, encouraging environmental and ethical improvements through the international clothing supply chain is essential for improving the sustainability of UK clothing. Dyeing is recognised as being a high impact process that consumes large quantities of water, chemicals and energy, and the dyeing process is known to be a significant source of pollution. **The Society of Dyes and Colourists** is providing a range of courses and educational qualifications on best practice in the wet processing of textiles, colour management, fastness testing and the environmental case for this. Running in the UK, India, Hong Kong, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and seeking to roll out to more countries, the range of courses are extending to include topics that will influence how dyehouses are run and how communication through the supply chain is managed in the future.

Action Area 4: Creating market drivers

Goods that are bought by the public sector can affect product markets. The development of the new Government Buying Standards (GBS) are designed to make it easier for government buyers to buy sustainably and for the supply chain to have a clear sense of Government's procurement needs. The GBS for textiles, developed by Defra, cover clothing, uniforms and some furnishings and will be mandatory for central Government departments from April 2011. The UK's GBS reflect, and in certain aspects go beyond, the EU voluntary standards on Green Public Procurement. Government departments and frontline service providers will be encouraged not only to meet the standard but to reach for the 'award' level of ambition. For more information visit:

<http://sd.defra.gov.uk/advice/public/buying/>

Public Procurement NHS Trial



Defra commissioned this pilot study to investigate how staff uniforms can be procured in the public sector with greater emphasis on sustainable development (SD). The project focused on NHS Trusts as these are bodies which are advised to follow Government guidance on sustainable procurement but not bound by it. The project provides expert guidance on significant aspects of SD in procurement exercises in order to deliver more sustainable, value for money solutions without compromising quality or function. Working with four Trusts, each at different stages of awareness and implementation of SD issues, the project will draw up case studies exploring lessons learnt and best practice in terms of sustainable procurement. The results of this trial will be shared widely with public sector procurers to encourage greater inclusion of sustainability criteria when procuring uniforms.

Image: Felipe Dupouy

Action Area 5: Traceability across the supply chain (ethics, trade and environment)

This action area encompasses a range of activities, including the development and implementation of ethical audit processes, the promotion of Fairtrade practices and animal welfare standards. Many of the actions in this area focus on retailers' commitments to improve supply chain traceability - understanding the path from primary production to finished garment is crucial for accountability.



The new actions which have been added in this area since the last progress report are:

- **Better Cotton Initiative's** commitment to develop an online central database keeping track of Better Cotton supplies and development of a unique bale ID system.
- **John Lewis** will also introduce a traceability system allowing transparency of cotton supply chains from growers to finished product.

Ongoing actions in this area include **Sainsbury's** traceability programme to be implemented in Bangladesh for 100% cotton garments, **George at Asda** has also committed to further develop their ethical audit process to cover more elements of the supply chain including fabric mills. **Tesco** is now in the roll out phase of its action on working with animal welfare groups to develop sourcing policies on animal welfare for cashmere, angora, feathers and non mulesed Australian merino wool. The company has established monitoring systems to manage enforcement of the process.

RAGs



Another action in this area is the **Responsible and Accountable Garment Sector initiative** (RAGS). Funded by UKaid from the Department for International Development (DFID), the RAGS Challenge Fund has been set up to support projects aimed at improving conditions of vulnerable workers in the ready-made garment production industries. The fund is aimed at workers in low-income countries in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa that supply the UK market. The overall objective of RAGS is that responsible and ethical production becomes the norm in the garment manufacturing sector supplying the UK. More specifically, it aims to stimulate and catalyse sustainable improvements in working conditions through better supply chain practices in the UK and in producer countries. At present, £2.1 million has been committed over two years for 12 projects, mainly targeting production and production management skills to increase wages through productivity, workers rights, audit skills and Fairtrade principles.

For more information visit: www.dfid.gov.uk

CONCLUSIONS



STAGE 4: Evaluation

At the end of 2010, WRAP commissioned an independent evaluation of several Defra and WRAP initiated voluntary agreements, including the Sustainable Clothing Roadmap. Although not yet published, the report will provide a useful source of feedback and input into future management of the roadmap process.

In April 2011, WRAP formally takes over as the lead body on the steering of the roadmap. This transfer represents recognition that the sustainability of clothing remains a priority issue and needs to be in the mainstream of Government funded activity to increase resource efficiency. Defra will remain closely involved throughout the process.

Looking back at the various stages of the roadmap process, in terms of evidence gathering, this area of activity is mostly complete and no further major research is anticipated at present. Stakeholder involvement continues to increase, and members of the roadmap's steering group chair sessions.

To date, the actions within the roadmap have been wide ranging. Feedback from participants highlights calls for the Action Plan to go beyond its current scope of primarily individual actions and to develop concerted action. In the future, the focus of the roadmap will be on developing smaller numbers of collaborative/group actions and in giving greater steer on target setting. This approach is already being taken on in the two task groups on clothes cleaning and reuse and recycling.

For the future, a rolling programme of task groups is envisaged, with new groups forming to address particular issues, and ending when their task is completed. A new group to agree metrics and product category rules for assessing resource impacts is currently under discussion.

Catalysing debate and increasing consumer understanding of the concept of sustainable clothing is also a key part of the roadmap process. Clothing made from certified organic cotton, recycled polyester clothing and Fair Trade certified clothes are all examples of actions being taken to improve the sustainability of clothing. Although varying in levels of sustainability improvement, these kinds of examples help consumers become aware of their purchases and what their choices mean for the wider world.

This is a global challenge, and the UK is not alone in seeking solutions to the issues surrounding sustainable clothing. Work continues with international partners to push for greater action in supplier countries. As population figures rise and prosperity increases around the globe, the demand for commodities will escalate and only those sectors and businesses within them who are preparing for this future will remain prosperous. Profitability and sustainability can no longer be seen as irreconcilable forces, but inextricably linked.

For further information please visit:

Defra website: www.defra.gov.uk

WRAP website: www.wrap.org.uk

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