INTRODUCTION
From October 23-27 2023, the Textile Exchange Conference was held in London for the first time. It was also our largest conference to date, with 1422 attendees coming together at the O2 Intercontinental, overlooking the River Thames in Greenwich. An additional 525 also took part via our virtual offering. We were joined by attendees from a total of 57 countries, including representatives of 730 companies.

On each day of the conference, sessions unpicked the defining issues faced by our global community today, providing a space to collaboratively explore challenges and solutions to overcoming the climate crisis.

We welcomed brands, supply chain partners, material innovators, farmers, non-profits, academics, and more to the floor, bringing changemakers from every corner of the fashion, textile, and apparel industry together to help shape a better system from the inside.

As we drive forward our vision of a global production model that gives back more than it takes from nature, the conference is a vital opportunity to foster connections throughout the entire supply network and facilitate alignment around best practices for a resilient future.

MEET OUR HOST, WHITNEY BAUCK

Our host for the conference this year was climate and environment journalist Whitney Bauck.

Known for her in-depth investigative writing at the intersection of climate and fashion, Whitney contributes to the Guardian, the New York Times, the Financial Times, New York Magazine, Grist, Bloomberg, and more. She has also held fellowships at the Metcalf Institute and Solutions Journalism Network, and previously built out the sustainability beat at Fashionista.

As our conference host, Whitney opened each morning with thought-provoking insights to lay the foundation for a full schedule of dynamic discussions. As each day drew to a close, Whitney shared reflections on key learnings, connecting the dots between different sessions and inspiring us to take action and move forward together.

RE-WATCH THE CONFERENCE ONLINE

Registered attendees will have access to the virtual platform for 90 days following the conference. You will need the email address you registered with to log in.

Access the virtual platform

Additionally, Textile Exchange members have access to the conference recordings and slides through The Hub.
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24

DAY ONE

IN THE INDUSTRY
CARVING OUT A COURSE FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

We started the conference by thinking about the industry’s responsibility in taking the lead. Together, we asked questions like, how can we create systems that hold core decision-makers accountable? Which targets is science telling us we must meet, and what tools do we have at our disposal to help us get there?

Day one was all about coming together, listening to the diversity of industry-wide experiences, and aligning around resources and programs that will enable us to collectively change the system.


“WHEN WE WORK COLLECTIVELY – LISTENING, LEARNING, AND MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH THE ENTIRE INDUSTRY – WE CAN REALLY START TO CO-CREATE SOLUTIONS AND MAKE TANGIBLE SYSTEMS CHANGE.”

— Claire Bergkamp, CEO, Textile Exchange

OPENING PLENARY: WHY WE’RE HERE
KEY TAKEAWAYS

Science and incoming legislation share a common mandate: change is no longer optional. The future of the fashion, apparel and textile industry depends on its capacity to make drastic shifts in the way it works. Achieving its targets and ambitions for climate and nature can’t be a question of “can we” or “should we,” but “we must.” There’s no shifting the goalposts when the goalposts are our planetary boundaries. At the same time, as incoming regulation comes into play, action is the only option.

The industry has the tools and frameworks it needs to start driving the transition. There are science-based frameworks to guide target setting for climate and nature. There are tools to support sourcing decisions based on holistic impact assessment and place-based data. And there is a direction of travel to improve the data that underpins these resources, as well as the associated climate modeling. So, while the due diligence that will be required from companies going forward can feel intimidating, the available tools have already evolved— or are evolving —to support the change.

The language that we use is fundamental. When it comes to systemic change, the language that we use can make a difference. As our keynote speaker Jon Alexander explained, changing the word “consumer” to “citizen” means tapping into the potential of individuals to partake in a better way of doing things. Talking about “buying into” rather than “buying from” means thinking about building loyalty beyond selling new products. And when we talk about “supply systems”, rather than “supply chains”, we remove the hierarchy often felt between brands and their suppliers or raw material producers.

“YOU CAN’T SOLVE AN ECOLOGICAL CRISIS FROM WITHIN A STORY THAT SAYS WE’RE SEPARATE FROM NATURE.”

– Jon Alexander, Author of Citizens

KEYNOTE: SHIFTING THE CONSUMPTION CONVERSATION
**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

Solutions must be multi-stakeholder, and sustainability goals shouldn’t be considered in silos.

The challenge of being a regenerative business isn’t one that a sustainability team can drive alone. The same actions that bring beneficial outcomes for climate and nature will drive long-term business resilience too. But while this decision-making leverage must be supported from the top down, the tangible actions that will help companies to meet their sustainability targets need to be taken by those on the ground. That’s why implementing sustainability solutions must bridge the gap between multiple levels of stakeholders, creating incentives that resonate with different parties and ensuring that the benefits are shared too.

We’ve got to look at a long-term vision over short-term outcomes. When it comes to change, decisions that prioritize long-term sustainability and systemic change might not lead to short-term gain. But in a future where business as usual can’t continue, the industry needs to imagine new solutions and work towards them. It’s about having a long-term vision knowing that the need to redefine success is urgent.
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25

DAY TWO

ON THE GROUND
Day two of the conference was grounded in a fundamental truth: while global brands and industry players often have the power and the financial potential to drive change, most of the real, tangible action happens on the ground – by farmers, forest managers, waste collectors, and other raw material producers.

Hypothetical solutions hold no weight in isolation. That’s why the second day of the conference aimed to elevate the voices of rightsholders, acknowledging that those most impacted by the problems hold critical insights to shape the solutions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The industry won’t be able to switch to more sustainable materials if it doesn’t invest in supply. Whether companies are setting targets for nature or making material commitments, the fibers and raw materials they use represent a powerful opportunity to drive beneficial outcomes. But it’s not as simple as just switching their supply. One of the key challenges for the fashion, textile, and apparel industry is the lack of availability of preferred materials to meet targets. If brands want to use materials that have been produced in a way that respects people and the planet, they need to invest in building these production systems from the ground up.

The outcomes for climate and nature that brands want to see will depend on their ability to collaborate with those on the ground. The industry needs to find creative solutions to work with raw material producers and supply chain partners to achieve the outcomes it wants to see. This will mean making language around expectations more accessible, and making the sustainability conversation more inclusive. It will also mean creating mechanisms to share or mitigate risk and cost up front. Ultimately, creating strong, long-term partnerships with producers will help brands deliver on both.

Starting to reconnect with raw material supply means getting out into the field. There is no replacement for getting out into the field and visiting raw material producers firsthand. The industry cannot hope to fully understand the nuances of the ecosystems behind its materials without experiencing them for itself. Data and tools can be powerful allies to help brands assess risk and opportunity, but some lessons have to be learned from the land.
KEY TAKEAWAYS

Finding a more meaningful way to engage with rightsholders will be fundamental. Often left out of the conversation, rightsholders are groups and individuals affected by an organization’s operations who often lack the power, influence, and ability to speak up. Meaningful and proactive engagement with rightsholders is crucial to addressing impacts on the ground and shaping credible and effective tools and programs in the industry. What’s crucial is that it goes two ways – not as an extractive process, but a two-way engagement, comprising of culturally-sensitive communication and supportive, peer-to-peer learning.

Brands can’t expect to simply source a certain material – they have to buy into a journey. Brands must make long-term commitments to farming communities if they want to see beneficial outcomes and build supply resilience. It won’t be possible to meet these objectives overnight, so targets and internal strategies must reflect this. Companies shouldn’t expect the instant gratification of being able to purchase a product and see immediate impacts – instead, they need to go along on the journey. And that is an incredibly exciting prospect.

“YOU CAN’T UNDERSTAND YOUR IMPACTS UNLESS YOU CAN TRACE YOUR RAW MATERIALS.”

– Jocelyn Wilkinson, Partner and Associate Director, Boston Consulting Group

CLOSING PLENARY: THE MATERIALS GAP
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26

DAY THREE

IN PROGRESS
Conversations on the third day of our conference centered around systems change and accelerating action going forward. Together, we looked at how we can shape a system that will facilitate the solutions and ideas discussed so far, and help us overcome any challenges along the way.

What does rethinking growth really look like in practice? Are innovative materials the answer; what about scaling textile to textile recycling – have we made any progress? And now governments and policymakers have started to listen, what do we need to start doing to meet upcoming regulations?

To answer all of these questions and more, we were joined by speakers from Benetton Group Srl, Biodiversify, Brunswick Group, Canopy, Centre for Sustainable Fashion, Circ, Conservation International, Fashion for Good, FSC International, Futerra, Inditex, IOS Ltd, J.B. Ellis & Sons, Kering, lululemon, Mara Hoffman, Maya’s Ideas, National Wildlife Federation (NWF), Ohana Public Affairs, Policy Hub, Renewcell, Sustainabelle Advisory Services, Terra Farmer, TextileGenesis, The Fashion Pact, UKFT, UN Environment Programme, Worn Again Technologies, and WWF US.

“SCALING SOLUTIONS IS GOING TO TAKE A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF INVESTMENT, BUT IT DOESN’T HAVE TO BE FINANCIAL. INVESTMENT MEANS GIVING THE MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCES – TIME, KNOWLEDGE, AND PUBLIC SUPPORT. THIS IS AN INVESTMENT THAT ANY BRAND CAN MAKE.”

– Luke Henning, Chief Business Officer at Circ

TRANSFORMING TEXTILE-TO-TEXTILE RECYCLING
KEY TAKEAWAYS

The industry needs to find a balance between regulation and imagination. An increasing amount of tools, resources, frameworks, and legislation are coming into play, and these will be incredibly useful to guide companies’ actions for climate and nature. But they shouldn’t let the rules be a limit to the way they think about sustainability solutions. Doing things by the book is not a substitute for imagining a new narrative, and some of the most effective strategies come from a place of creativity – trying things that haven’t been done before. It is important for the industry not to lose its curiosity, and keep creativity and imagination at the fore.

Sustainability teams and finance teams should be speaking the same language. Often, arguments made for sustainability’s sake are important for business prospects. With upcoming legislation on the cards, failing to meet new requirements will not only impact business resilience – it will affect market access too. The case for investing in strong supplier relationships is no longer relevant only for sustainability teams, but they need to have the same conversations with different words. Positioning these arguments from a financial perspective will help them to resonate with leadership teams. Plus, strategies like using new technology to better forecast consumer demand to reduce overproduction make perfect business sense.

Traceability will be fundamental to address climate and nature impacts as well as comply with legislation. The strategic sourcing of preferred land-based raw materials unlocks a powerful opportunity for companies not only to minimize negative impacts on climate and nature, but to participate in bringing about positive ones too. However, brands can’t access this lever if they don’t know where their materials come from. At the same time, upcoming legislation is going to mandate this level of traceability. If there is one thing to prioritize for teams to future-proof their companies, it’s knowing where materials come from. This will also be the start of relationship-building and supply chain transparency.
KEY TAKEAWAYS

Innovation and ideas are ready, but they need pre-competitive collaboration to scale. There is no longer a reason for companies to be waiting for better ideas or innovations to come along. The solutions are out there— but they need support. That support can’t be from a single brand or company either. These projects require backing from multiple sources to make them resilient, strong, and scalable. Companies should look beyond having a specific material or partner be unique to them and forget about marketing the next material innovation. Instead, they should recognize the agency for long-term change that comes with pre-competitive collaboration.

Ultimately, education and knowledge sharing will unlock long-term transformation. There are tools. There are frameworks. The legislation is coming. But to use these effectively and to maximize their potential, the industry is going to need to share knowledge and experience. The challenges we all face are incredibly complex and nuanced, and in many cases, we have to learn by doing. Sharing mistakes and successes to help others work out the way forward will turn best practice into common protocol. Only with this kind of openness can we speed up progress towards the impacts we want to see.

“SPEAKING AS A MEMBER OF GENERATION Z, IT’S AMAZING TO SEE HOW THERE IS A NEW HUNGER FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE INDUSTRY, ITS SUPPLY CHAIN, AND HOW THIS AFFECTS EVERYONE.”

– Maya Penn, Activist, Educator, and Author
OPENING PLENARY: RADICALLY IMAGINING A BETTER FUTURE
SESSION SPOTLIGHT
If we do not address excess production, disposable fashion, and runaway consumerism, we will be unable to achieve any of the targets and goals we are setting.

This session saw Clare Press, Founder of Wardrobe Crisis in conversation with Josephine Philips, Founder of SOJO, and Jon Alexander, Author of Citizens, with discussions exploring how we can change market mentalities and meaningfully confront overconsumption.

Josephine shared a powerful take on how we can radically reimagine – and slow down – the future of fashion, saying that “the concept of future proofing is so poignant. We need to be thinking of how we can create a future-proof ecosystem of life-long value.”
THE BRAND-PRODUCER CONNECTION

In this opening plenary, we heard from Sébastien Kopp, Co-Founder of VEJA, alongside Orlando Rivera, CEO at Bergman Rivera – one of VEJA’s core suppliers of organic cotton – in a conversation moderated by Ashley Gill, Textile Exchange’s Chief Strategy Officer.

This was a ‘best-practice’ session, providing an opportunity to learn from rare brand-producer connections that have been built in a way that redefines ‘business as usual’.

The session shone a light on what is possible when brands foster strong relationships with farmers, building out the supply chain with this as the starting point. The partnership between VEJA and Bergman Rivera is testament to the host of beneficial outcomes that arise when a genuine sense of humanity is infused into business operations from the very beginning.

“WE DON’T LOOK FOR CLIENTS ANYMORE, WE LOOK FOR PARTNERS. BECAUSE WE’RE SELLING A JOURNEY, NOT A PRODUCT. WHEN BRANDS INVEST IN OUR PROJECTS, THEY BECOME A PART OF A JOURNEY, SEEING CHANGES IN THE WELLBEING OF NATURE, SOIL, AND THE PEOPLE INVOLVED ALONG THE WAY.”

– Orlando Rivera, CEO, Bergman Rivera

BEST PRACTICE ON THE GROUND

All about inspiration, this session looked at how on-the-ground production practices can drive positive climate impact – and how we can promote these practices through our unified standard criteria and standards systems at large.

We heard from farmers from a range of geographies – from Tasmania to England, South Africa to Peru – all of whom are going above and beyond the current standard requirements to nurture the land and its ecosystems for generations to come.

As expressed by Evelyn Diaz, Alpaca Farmer at Fundo Ganadero El Nevado, “we cannot change the past, but if we want to change the future, we must look around us and learn how to respect others, fostering a symbiotic relationship with our environment and with all living beings.”
Radically Imagining a Better Future

Day three’s opening plenary featured activist, educator, and author Maya Penn, who founded her sustainably orientated fashion brand Maya’s Ideas at just eight years old, and Dilys Williams, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Fashion, who has over 25 years’ experience in design for sustainability.

Both speakers have created careers for themselves in which they feel like they have the agency to make change happen. Whether it be through education or activism, imagining their own roles within a system was the start of changing it from the inside.

The session saw the two generations coming together and looking to the future, exploring what larger brands can learn from sustainable design practices and the never-ending human ability to expand our imagination and creativity – urging that this is crucial to building better systems.

Our Trajectory of Change

The final closing plenary featured our host, Whitney Bauck, in conversation with Claire Bergkamp, Textile Exchange’s CEO and Ashley Gill, Textile Exchange’s Chief Strategy Officer.

The panel reflected on the urgency of the situation faced by our industry, recognizing that, while our conversations and tools have evolved significantly in recent years, the action of scaling solutions now needs to follow.

To get there, a fundamental mindset shift is needed, acknowledging the interdependent nature of our industry and that, as expressed by Claire, “we win together, and we lose together.” To truly make progress and build momentum, Ashley made the point that “we now have an opportunity to take individual small projects and link them together through partnerships so that they’re no longer individual one-offs, but an interconnected network of collective action.”
ROUND TABLE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
This year, we brought our round table communities together in one place for a pre-conference Round Table General Assembly

To help us deliver our ambitious Climate+ goals, this past year we introduced a new, more action-oriented round table governance strategy. As part of this shift, and in response to feedback from the 2022 conference, we made the decision to no longer hold individual round table summits at our annual conference.

Instead, throughout 2023, we have been hosting dedicated global and regional round table summits. Our global summits have convened round table communities at existing industry events to gather fiber-specific insights, and our regional summits have connected the industry to fiber and material producers to strengthen understandings of regional landscapes, fibers, and contexts.

At the conference this year, we brought our round table communities together in one place for a pre-conference Round Table General Assembly. This was an opportunity to refresh on the core vision and objectives that unify our diverse range of round table communities, while catching up on our collective progress and direction of travel.

Key updates included:

- The unified standard, with discussions on key takeaways from feedback and revisions made to the second draft.
- The Biodiversity Landscape Analysis
- Next steps for the Regenerative Outcomes Framework

Textile Exchange team members also shared updates on Round Table Working Groups, including:

- Textile-to-textile recycling roadmap
- rPET feedstock availability
- MMCF Energy and Manufacturing
- Cotton Regenerative Measurements and Metrics
- Animal Welfare
- Animal Materials Regenerative Measurements and Metrics
- Leather Call to Action

The Round Table General Assembly ended with an interactive workshop, providing a space to reflect and share ideas for meetings, summits, and working groups for the coming year.
FIELD TRIPS
TO FULLY GO FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE, WE’VE GOT TO GET OUT AND SEE WHAT’S REALLY HAPPENING IN THE FIELD

The final day of the conference was dedicated to optional field trips. Formerly named “textcursions”, field trips are a unique opportunity to meet with farmers and producers working in this space. It’s about going back to the start of the supply chain, building an understanding of where raw materials come from and how they impact communities and ecosystems on the ground.

This year, field trips focused on a diverse range of materials in a variety of contexts – from regenerative animal fibers in England to recycled textiles in Sweden and much more.

REALITY ZONE WORKSHOP: MECHANICAL COTTON, HOSTED BY ACCELERATING CIRCULARITY

Held at the conference venue, this session was an opportunity to discover the ins and outs of what can be done with mechanically recycled cotton today. It included a showcase for commercial, scaled products from a cross-section of global suppliers, representing fiber, yarn, fabrics, and garments.

REGENERATIVE WOOL, HOSTED BY CHALLACOMBE FARM AND THE DARTMOOR SHEPHERD

Attendees saw how two different sheep farms are following regenerative, Pasture for Life, and organic standards, building an understanding of the various approaches to sheep management under different certifications and how they impact the land, animal welfare, and biodiversity.

FIBRE FRAGMENTATION FROM TEXTILES IN ACTION, HOSTED BY THE MICROFIBRE CONSORTIUM

This field trip was all about fiber fragmentation and its environmental impact, giving attendees a behind-the-scenes laboratory view of the TMC Test Method for measuring fiber fragmentation from fabrics. The session also explained the scientific measurement of microfibre loss, widely adopted by signatories of The Microfibre 2030 Commitment.

FLAX LINEN AND HEMP, HOSTED BY ALLIANCE FOR EUROPEAN FLAX-LINEN AND HEMP

Attendees travelled to the heart of the flax region to uncover the practicalities of flax cultivation and retting. The trip included a visit to a scutching mill and a spinning mill, where flax-linen fiber and yarn are produced. It also included discussions on hemp, as well as EU production figures, market insights, flax-linen traceability certifications, and life cycle data.

REVITALIZING BRITISH WOOL, HOSTED BY PILIO

The focus of this field trip was to discuss how we can revitalise British wool in order to meet Textile Exchange’s Climate+ goals on time. Attendees visited an Organic and Pasture for Life-certified farm that is proactively raising the bar for nature, exploring different avenues for transforming the British wool industry.

TRACEABLE SUPPLY CHAINS AND REGENERATING LAND, HOSTED BY BRITISH PASTURE LEATHER

This trip featured Pasture for Life-certified regenerative farmers, whose farms supply hides for British Pasture Leather – a new supply of leather made from the hides of cattle raised on regenerative farms in the UK. Attendees explored the principles and practices of agroecological and regenerative livestock production, discussing how supply chain traceability for textiles and leather can promote the benefits of regenerative agriculture.

MMCF PRODUCTION, HOSTED BY LENZING FIBERS

For this field trip, attendees travelled to Lenzing, Austria to tour the vast Lenzing manmade cellulosic fiber (MMCF) production facility, providing a rare opportunity to get direct insight into how TENCEL™ Lyocell, TENCEL™ Modal, and ECOVERO™ Viscose are made.

CLOSING THE INNOVATION GAP, HOSTED BY XEROS

For this field trip, attendees visited a research and development lab in Sheffield, learning how to make lower impact decisions on raw material processes as those materials move through the supply chain into Tiers 1 and 2 – covering chemistry, microfiber shedding and mitigation strategies, pollution, effluent waste, end of life, and manufacturing processes.

TEXTILE RECYCLING, HOSTED BY RENEWCELL

Aimed at brands and retailers, this field trip was an opportunity to learn about the production of cellulosic pulp derived from 100% recycled textiles at Renewcell’s commercial scale production facility in Sundsvall, Sweden.

SUSTAINABLE DENIM DESIGN, FABRICS, AND WASHES, HOSTED BY ISKO AND THE CREATIVE ROOM

On this field trip, attendees learned about the sustainability potential of denim fabric, both in terms of ingredients profile and production process, featuring discussions on denim washings. There was also a demonstration where attendees could see laser technology for treating denim first-hand.

Sign up to our newsletter to hear about opportunities to host field trips next year ➔
NEW TOOLS, RESOURCES, AND INITIATIVES
EQUIPPING THE INDUSTRY TO ACCELERATE ACTION

As an organization, a key part of our mission is to inspire and equip our growing community of brands, retailers, manufacturers, farmers, and others committed to climate action toward more purposeful production, right from the start of the supply chain.

For real change to happen, everyone needs a clear path to beneficial impact. We’re committed to ensuring that, going forward, every stakeholder has the information they need to make more informed choices and plan out their priorities.

During the conference this year, we launched a new tool, a new resource, and new initiative – all of which build on our existing frameworks and lay the foundation for collective, connected action. From providing visibility into location-specific impacts to sharing fresh perspectives on raw material strategies and creating a dedicated biodiversity community, we’re empowering the industry with the means to act.
To close day one of the conference, Textile Exchange officially launched the Materials Impact Explorer (MIE), alongside Google, NGIS, and World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

The MIE is a first-of-its-kind risk assessment tool for the fashion, textile, and apparel industry, helping brands to understand the regional-specific risks and impacts associated with their fiber sourcing. The industry is one of the largest contributors to the global climate and ecological crisis, and yet brands often have little-to-no visibility into the environmental risks and opportunities associated with the materials they source.

In this initial launch, the tool will look at risks relating to climate, freshwater, and biodiversity (with forests and air pollution to be added in the next phase), as well as providing risk ratings and recommendations for brands based on their sourcing portfolios. Risk is assessed using over 160 data sets, including Google Earth Engine, The World Bank, The World Health Organization, Quantis WALDB, and the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT).

As a free, publicly available tool, the Materials Impact Explorer will help brands and suppliers make more sustainable sourcing decisions, sharing tailored recommendations on how to mitigate risk, reduce environmental impact, and support local and global sustainability initiatives.

Discover the Materials Impact Explorer ➔

The second day of the conference closed with the launch of a new report by BCG, in collaboration with Textile Exchange and Quantis, titled Sustainable Raw Materials Will Drive Profitability for Fashion and Apparel Brands.

In recent years, more and more brands have been making pledges to decarbonize their supply chains. However, as it stands today, demand for preferred materials could exceed supply by as much as 133 million tons by 2030. The report urges brands to take action now to show they are committed, and that they will actually invest in low-climate-impact raw materials. Otherwise, it’s too risky for raw material producers, farmers, and growers to increase supply.

The report found that brands that successfully increase the share of preferred raw materials in their portfolios may see a 6% average net profit increase over a five-year period. As such, the report makes the business case for why C-suite teams need to invest in preferred alternatives to conventional materials.

To get there, brands need to focus on fostering direct and long-lasting partnerships in supply systems, which means making long-term commitments with farmers, growers, mills, spinners, and finished goods suppliers to de-risk the availability of preferred materials, increase their security, and clearly communicate their importance to the market.

This report is just one resource that companies can use to inform their raw materials strategy, and the industry must go forward with a holistic, future-proof, and just approach.

Read the report ➔

On October 26, Textile Exchange launched the Biodiversity Community of Practice, which will be located on The Hub – Textile Exchange’s online community.

The launch of this community of practice will follow-up on the newly launched Biodiversity Landscape Analysis by providing a dedicated online space to connect stakeholders in our key production landscapes as well as across supply chains and for stakeholders to engage/share/access information and resources related to biodiversity.

Join the Biodiversity Community of Practice ➔

This report is just one resource that companies can use to inform their raw materials strategy, and the industry must go forward with a holistic, future-proof, and just approach.
PHOTOGRAPHY, EDITORIAL, AND CREATIVE PROJECTS
EXPLORING TEXTILE TRANSFORMATIONS WITH MAGNUM PHOTOS

The second edition of Textile Exchange’s Materials Matter photography competition, in collaboration with Magnum Photos, invited emerging photographers to share a project under the theme “Textile Transformations.” This year’s brief explored the visual stories that take place when fibers and materials are cultivated, created, spun, woven, sewn, loved, and cherished – gaining cultural and emotional significance through the journey.

The competition saw over 500 photographers from over 70 countries share their interpretations of the multitude of ways in which we transform textiles, and textiles in turn transform us. By placing these themes at the center of the story, the resulting 8,000 photographs reframed the way we relate to their social, cultural, and environmental implications, helping to alter our attitude towards these everyday items.

Clothing and textiles connect us intrinsically to our planet and its many ecosystems, cultures, and communities. While each transformation brings cultural and emotional significance, our collective appreciation of textiles often centers around the product itself, rather than where it came from, who created it, or what it has come to mean.

Chosen by our jury including Aditi Mayer (Photojournalist, Sustainability Activist), Claire Bergkamp (CEO, Textile Exchange), Sonia Jeunet (Education Director, Magnum), Yessenia Funes (Independent Environmental Journalist), Emily Chan (Senior Sustainability and Features Editor, British Vogue), Lindokuhle Sobekwa (Magnum Photographer), and Peter Van Agtmael (Magnum Photographer), the winner and runner-up portrayed entirely contrasting relationships between people and textiles, highlighting both their incredible potential to transform communities and shape identities, as well as contributing to a societal model driven by consumption.
Kin Coedel is an analog photographer from Hong Kong who grew up in Canada. Having worked as a womenswear designer, and later as a fashion photographer, in 2020 Kin took a break to travel to Tibet, Mongolia, and India to explore the roof of the world and places that are essentially off-limits to Western cultures.

Coedel’s journey took him back to his own origins, as he set out to redefine how Eastern communities are portrayed. His work aims to go beyond being a voyeuristic lens, prioritizing genuine exchanges with local communities. Mindful of power dynamics and historical representations, the artist collaborates with translators to ensure understanding and consent, co-creating images that reflect authentic stories. His work challenges preconceptions, inviting viewers to engage in meaningful dialogues about the traditions, struggles, and triumphs of these communities.

*Dyal Thak*, the name of Coedel’s submission, means “a common thread” in Tibetan. The project began with an assignment from Norlha Atelier, a womenswear label that specializes in handwoven yak khullu wool. This raw material, deeply ingrained in Tibetan cultural heritage, embodies centuries of traditional herding practices and craft. Through this series, Coedel showcases the nomadic community’s sustainable herding practices and the stories that are woven into every thread, celebrating the transformative power of tradition preserved and revived.

As our 2023 competition winner, Coedel will receive an £8,000 commission for Textile Exchange as well as mentorship with a Magnum photographer. His works were also displayed in an original exhibition at the conference.
Berlin-based artist Madeleine Brunnmeier studied Visual Communication at the Berlin University of the Arts as well as at Musashino Art University Tokyo. Characterized by curiosity, explores both observationally and conceptually the relationships between individuals and their environment.

She often likes to work with places and things she finds without changing them, but pointing out the narrative she sees through the process of staging. Another big part of her work focuses on portrait photography where she recently discovered her joy in analogue working processes.

Brunnmeier’s competition entry, Gestalten, is a photo series of temporary sculptures, composed of people and all their possessions of clothing. Throughout our lives, our clothing becomes an archive – a mass of identity, culture, and memory. We are constantly surrounded by textiles. Our clothes are an everyday companion, a second skin. By bringing these garments to the fore, Gestalten encourages reflection on the relationships people have with their material possessions.

As the competition runner-up, Brunnmeier will receive a £5,000 commission for Textile Exchange and mentorship with a Magnum Photographer. Her works were also displayed in an original exhibition at the conference.
UNWOVEN: MOVING FROM IDEAL TO REAL

Unwoven is a new editorial project by Textile Exchange. Its aim is to pull apart and reconstruct perceptions of clothing and textiles today by deepening our understanding of the materials that make them, and the stories, questions, and concepts behind them.

This first edition, which was available in print at the conference, brings together perspectives from around the world. Each piece offers its own take on the links between materials and people, place, culture, and nature – as well as their interconnectedness with questions around sustainability, social justice, and systems change. An antidote to the ambivalence that often characterizes our relationship with material items, it reframes their significance in our lives by helping to weave them into a wider conversation.

PART 1: PLACES

The materials in our clothing and textiles originate from all over the globe. But we rarely think about how the final product connects us to different geographies, as well as to other lived experiences and ways of thinking. This chapter is a reminder of these connections. On-the-ground narratives from farms and textile processing facilities document difficult realities, as well as stories of hope and inspiration. As a collection, they remind us of the cultures and communities behind our textiles and illustrate the agency that this diversity of perspectives holds to help us shape a better future.

PART 2: PERSPECTIVES

Clothing and textile production can help us understand and reflect on some of the wider systemic challenges we are facing as a population today. That is because the parameters and power dynamics within these production systems are defined by the same structures as our society as a whole. In this chapter, we draw on a range of subject-matter experts who are breaking ground with their ways of thinking. From degrowth to diversity, scaling innovation to telling better stories, these pieces share expert insight as to what best practice currently looks like – from the perspective of those at the forefront of these conversations.

STORY SPOTLIGHTS: OUR MATERIALS

As our first editorial project in print, Unwoven was an opportunity for purposeful material sourcing. Unwoven was printed on Gmund Hemp 50% and recycled paper by GF Smith, available in a limited number of copies at the conference newsstand.

This mindful use of materials extends to the conference at large. This year, Debrand and Coleo joined forces to produce circular lanyards for the Textile Exchange Conference. This partnership demonstrates how a collaborative ecosystem of suppliers can produce, distribute, pre-process, and circulate products designed with next-life logistics (e.g. recycling, resale, donation, repair) at their inception, minimizing environmental impact and protecting our planet’s resources.

Thank you to our contributors

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VISUAL NOTETAKING
CAPTURING COMPLEX CONVERSATIONS WITH VISUAL NOTETAKING

This year, Textile Exchange worked with Tamara-Jade Kaz, an artist and educator based in London to chronicle the ideas explored during conference sessions, synthesizing key learnings together in one place.

In Tamara-Jade’s words, “visual notetaking is the practice of capturing conversation in a visual way. The notetaker listens to the content of a discussion, lecture, workshop, panel, or meeting and illustrates live, creating a visual record of what was discussed as the event unfolds in real time.”

The resulting diagrams provide a dynamic point of reference to look back on, capturing both the big picture and the granular details of specific conference sessions in a visually appealing web, helping to draw connections between different takeaways.
Moving from 'Ideal' to the 'Real'

We're in this together

Moving from 'Ideal' to the 'Real'

Why We're Here

All social movements start with imagination

- Leah Thomas

Urgency

We must act now.

Claire Bergkamp

Textile Exchange

Making change happen at scale

Engaging every level of the supply system

Real action happens on the ground

- Farmers
- Forest managers
- Waste collectors
- Raw material producers

Making change happen at scale

Purposeful and practical moves

@ TamaraJadeKaz

Radical imagination

Not just a focus on greenhouse gas

We must consider nature + humans too

2023 Textile Exchange Conference

1300 attendees in person
400 online
MATERIALS ARE THE KEYS TO THE CASTLE

85% of fashion brands have set targets for scopes.

Regulatory + Target Pressure + Pressure

To meet these targets fast, we need to work on scaling raw materials today.

WHAT IS PREVENTING THE GAP FROM CLOSING?
1. Supply issues
2. No united front
3. Lack of incentives
4. Climate change

WHAT WE WILL NEED IN 2030 IS VERY FAR AWAY FROM WHAT WE WILL HAVE IN 2030

Huge demand for preferred raw materials.

But...

BUSINESS CASE:
Predicted 6% rise in profits if raw materials targets are met and if people act now.

Driven by:
1. Fixed pricing on raw materials
2. Suppression of growth
3. Cost of regulatory compliance

FACING THE CHALLENGE OF THE LACK OF AVAILABILITY OF PREFERRED MATERIALS

MATERIALS MANIFESTO
1. End-to-end traceability
2. Science-based approaches
3. Diverse material portfolio
4. Win Win Win! (fashion brands, producers & nature)
5. Strong supply chain
6. Incentives

NEED UNITED FRONT ON
- Shifting mindset about material sourcing strategy
- Brands co-investing in raw materials

Textile Exchange @TAMARAJADEKAZ
Prioritising value over volume

The issue lies at the intersection of sustainability + finance

We want a different kind of growth

Too early to set growth reduction targets

We need broader understanding across the industry

Need more buy-in at the executive level

Full value chain must be involved

At Benetton, we focus on:
- Lower impact materials
- High quality products with longevity
- Maximising efficiency of resources

Decoupling economic performance from the increase in the volume of garments produced

We need to train our customer base to value garments

A business imperative as well as an ethical one

We need to protect future profits

We need relative reduction

Absolute reduction

Lowering baseline of emissions regardless of company size and/or turnover

Just transition in our supply chains

Textile Exchange

Reimagining growth

Nicoletta Rachel Yoann Sartori Arthur Regent

Benetton UN Environment Programme

Kering
Day three saw the presentation of Textile Exchange’s annual Ryan Young Climate+ Awards, recognizing individuals and teams that show a bold and courageous spirit and commitment to accelerating action towards our Climate+ goal in the fashion, textile, and apparel industry.

This year, there were three winners of the “Pioneering Collective” category, celebrating teams who, through their collaboration, have become catalysts for driving positive change.

Firstly, *British Pasture Leather* were recognized for their inspirational work towards regional-focused solutions. British Pasture Leather are advancing the growth of regenerative farming practices, building appreciation and value for the materials produced by these farms, resulting in positive impacts for people, nature, and climate.

Next up was the *Tapestry Coachtopia* team, whose Coachtopia product line is not only a success story for traceable recycled materials but also provides a solid model for scaling solutions. Their program is commendable in the way it engages consumers to recycle, promoting a more circular system overall.

Finally, the team at *Circ* were recognized for their science-driven, impact-focused mindset, which has enabled them to overcome key challenges in textile-to-textile recycling. On their mission to pave the way for a circular future, they are accelerating innovation with yarn and fabric solutions.

The “Rising Star” category recognizes the work of individuals with less than 10 years of industry experience – the next generation of changemakers who are challenging the status quo, leading the way toward solutions for a better tomorrow.

*Jana van den Bergen* was this year’s Rising Star, who is working on transforming the fashion industry towards a more circular future as Innovation Manager at Fashion for Good. The winners received a free full-access pass to the conference and will also be awarded five mentorship hours with Textile Exchange experts, as well as waived membership fees for one year for new friend or supporter-level members.

The winners received a free full-access pass to the conference and will also be awarded five mentorship hours with Textile Exchange experts, as well as waived membership fees for one year for new friend or supporter-level members.
The annual Textile Exchange Conference brings material production into the climate conversation, providing a space for leaders and experts from across the fashion, textile, and apparel industry to collaboratively explore challenges and solutions to overcoming the climate crisis.

Textile Exchange thanks you for your ongoing support, and would like to share some coverage highlights from our conference this year.
TEXTILE EXCHANGE CHANNELS – NEWSLETTERS

OCTOBER 23–27
LONDON, UK

2023 TEXTILE EXCHANGE CONFERENCE

CATCH-UP ON EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED ON THE FIRST DAY OF THIS YEAR’S CONFERENCE IN LONDON

We started the conference by thinking about the industry’s responsibility in taking the lead. How can we create systems that hold core decision-makers accountable? Which targets is science telling us we must meet, and what tools do we have at our disposal to help us get there?

Day one was all about coming together, listening to the diversity of industry wide experiences, and aligning around resources and programs that will enable us to collectively change the system.

OCTOBER 23–27
LONDON, UK

2023 TEXTILE EXCHANGE CONFERENCE

CATCH-UP ON EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED ON THE SECOND DAY OF THIS YEAR’S CONFERENCE

Day two of our conference was grounded in a fundamental truth: while global brands and industry players often have the power and the financial potential to drive change, most of the real, tangible action happens on the ground – by farmers, forest managers, waste collectors, and other raw material producers.

Hypothetical solutions hold no weight in isolation. That’s why the second day of the conference aimed to elevate the voices of rightsholders, acknowledging that those most impacted by the problems hold critical insights to shape the solutions.

OCTOBER 23–27
LONDON, UK

2023 TEXTILE EXCHANGE CONFERENCE

DISCOVER AN OVERVIEW AND KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE THIRD DAY OF OUR CONFERENCE

Conversations on the third day of our conference centered around systems change and accelerating action going forward. Together, we looked at how we can shape a system that will facilitate the solutions and ideas discussed so far, and help us overcome any challenges along the way.

What does rethinking growth really look like in practice? Are innovative materials the answer; what about scaling textile to textile recycling – have we made any progress? And now governments and policymakers have started to listen, what do we need to start doing to meet upcoming regulations?
As the industry’s key climate goal deadlines near, Textile Exchange has released a report that aims to convince fashion execs of the long-term financial upsides of investing in sustainable materials, alongside a new sourcing tool for practitioners.

Read the full newsletter ➔

Do words matter? Participants at the weeklong symposium, the sustainability trade group’s largest yet with more than 1,300 in-person attendees and 400 virtual ones, certainly thought so. “Supply system” versus “supply chain,” “partners” versus “buyers,” participants at the weeklong London event parsed the power of language.

Read the full newsletter ➔

Textile recycling company Circ, fashion company Tapestry and regenerative farming specialists British Pasture Leather have been named the recipients of Textile Exchange’s 2023 Ryan Young Climate+ Awards.

The awards, announced at Textile Exchange’s annual conference here in London, is named in honour of the industry body’s former chief operating officer who led the development of its Climate+ initiative to reduce emissions from fibre and raw material production by 45% by 2030.

Read the full newsletter ➔
SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE – INSTAGRAM STORIES: WHITNEY BAUCK

I was in London for this year’s @textileexchange conference, which brought together 1300+ industry experts to figure out (to way oversimplify) how we fix this industry that has such an impact.
It was an honor and joy to host the 2023 Textile Exchange conference in London last week — this gathering brought together 1300+ experts from around the globe to focus on what it will take for the fashion and textiles industries to operate within planetary boundaries for climate, biodiversity, water and soil health, as well as community well-being.

I spent the week introducing themes and speakers and synthesizing takeaways from the main stage, in addition to hosting a cotton growers’ panel and facilitating the closing plenary with CEO Claire Bergkamp and CSO Ashley Gill.

The true highlight for me, though, was learning from the many farmers present this year, representing communities in Peru, Brazil, Australia, Texas, Pakistan and more. Meeting those who feel climate impacts most intimately on the landscapes they steward was a powerful reminder of why we convene in the first place — and why it matters so much that we get this right.

Thanks again for having me, Textile Exchange!
This week I’m headed to London to speak at the annual @textileexchange conference which brings together leaders and experts from across the fashion, textile, and apparel industry, providing a space to collaboratively explore challenges and solutions to overcome the climate crisis. From designers, to farmers, to educators and more from around the world — the conference is a vital opportunity to facilitate alignment around best practices for a resilient future and foster connections along the entire supply chain – between those who have the resources to drive positive change, and those on the ground who know exactly what needs to happen in practice.
The annual conference brings people together from along the fashion and textile supply chain to be inspired, to learn, to network, and to be equipped to take action on climate change.
This is my overexcited face at catching up with @veja co-founder @sebastien_kopp 😊 Years ago I went to his Paris office to record a podcast (it’s Ep 38 - listen here: https://thewardrobecrisis.com/podcast/2018/6/9/podcast-ep-38-veja 🎧). Yesterday at @textileexchange he spoke beautifully about how #Veja began & grew with its core values intact. The early days of sourcing organic cotton & natural rubber, sitting down with the producers, ignoring the regular prices & saying: “But how much do you need to live a decent life?” And paying 60% more, with 2-3 year contracts. Asked for his advice for other companies, he demurred, said he only knows how Veja does things. But when pressed, he said more empathy, more love. 😊 No wonder they’re my fave sneakers. It is possible to do business right.
#textileexchangeconference2023
ATTENDING COMPANIES
EXHIBITING COMPANIES
AADHAVA APPARELS
Aquarelle India Pvt Ltd
Aware™ Traceability
BanQu
Bemberg, ASAHI KASEI CORPORATION
BIORESTORE
Birla Cellulose, part of Aditya Birla Group
bluesign technologies ag
Bureau Veritas
Carbonfact
Chargeurs – NATIVA
CIRCULOSE® by Renewcell
COLOURizd Ltd.
Control Union Certifications BV
Cotton Connect
CRAFTEVO / V&A Japan Corporation
Debrand
Ecom
Ecotextile News
Elevate Textiles, Inc.

Far Eastern New Century Corporation
Fusion Clothing
Future Fabrics Expo by The Sustainable Angle
G.Schneider SPA
GSCS International
IDFL
IndiDye®
InResSt Co., Ltd
Intertek
ISKO
ISKUR TEKSTIL ENERJI SAN. VE TIC. A.S.
Lenzing
Materra
Matoha
Naia™ from Eastman
Neo Concept
OnceMore (Sodra)
Ortained
PRATIBHA BALANCE
Punarbhavaa Sustainable Products

Recover Textile Systems SL
rematters - textile recycling solutions
Renoon
REO-ECO Recycle Tech
retraced GmbH
Richa Global Exports Pvt Ltd
Sanko Textile
SAYA by Nan Ya Plastics
Sourcemap
Suedwolle Group GmbH
Suminter India Organics Pvt. Ltd.

Säntis Textiles and Kipas Textiles
TEXAID
Thai Acrylic Fibre Co. Ltd.
The Biodiversity Consultancy
Toyota Tsusho Corporation
TreeToTextile AB
TrusTrace
U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol
USB Certification
Usha Yarns Limited
ABOUT TEXTILE EXCHANGE
Textile Exchange is a global non-profit driving positive impact on climate change across the fashion and textile industry. We guide a growing community of brands, manufacturers, and farmers towards more purposeful production from the very start of the supply chain.

Our goal is to help the industry to achieve a 45% reduction in the emissions that come from producing fibers and raw materials by 2030. To get there, we’re keeping our focus holistic and interconnected, accelerating the adoption of practices that improve the state of our water, soil health, and biodiversity too.

For real change to happen, everyone needs a clear path to positive impact. That’s why we believe that approachable, step-by-step instruction paired with collective action can change the system to make preferred materials and fibers the accessible default, mobilizing leaders through attainable strategies, proven solutions, and a driven community.

At Textile Exchange, materials matter.
To learn more, visit TextileExchange.org.
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