



## Aditya Birla Fashion & Retail Limited (ABFRL)

**Sector:** Apparel & Retail

**Region:** Based in India, product sold in India

Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd. ([ABFRL](#)) is the Fashion & Retail business vertical of Aditya Birla Group. The company is the custodian of leading fashion brands in India: Louis Philippe, Van Heusen, Allen Solly, Peter England and Pantaloons.

ABFRL's product sustainability claim appears on [Earth Chinos](#) produced by one of its brands, Peter England. The Earth Chinos have a smart hangtag that allows consumers to access information behind the making of the chino trousers. The information available on the hangtags answers the following questions:

- Where was it made?
- Who made it?
- Which dyes were used?

The product sustainability claim made by ABFRL is based on a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) that compared the environmental impacts of the EarthColors® natural dyes used in Earth Chinos with conventional petrochemical dyes.



## Mindset

**Life Cycle Thinking:** Earth Chinos are made with dyes that are synthesized from non-edible agricultural or herbal industry waste, such as leaves or nutshells, leaving the edible part still available for food consumption. During the synthesis of [EarthColors®](#), 100% of the natural raw material is transformed to a new dyestuff, guaranteeing full waste management into own production. According to the LCA, the use of natural dyes was found to have 350 times less impact on water footprint, 700 times less harmful impact on human wellness because of fewer chemicals, 400 times less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and 600 times less negative impact on natural resources.

**Hotspots Analysis Approach:** A hotspots analysis for the dye manufacturing was performed by Archroma, a chemical manufacturing company. Hence, the sustainability claim focuses on the dyeing process and the use-phase of the garment is not considered.

**Mainstreaming Sustainability:** At ABFRL, all sustainability initiatives are carried out as part of the 'ReEarth' movement. ReEarth is a movement to "give back to our planet what we've taken from it over the years". ABFRL set itself the target of becoming the most sustainable apparel and retail brand in Asia by 2020. To this end, product sustainability is driven through four pillars – innovation & development, vendor development & management, quality and customer centricity.

## Principle 1: Reliability

Based on the application of [Near-field communication](#) (NFC) technology, EarthColors® dyestuffs are [bluesign system](#) and Global Organic Textile Standard ([GOTS](#)) approved products. EarthColors® received the Outdoor Gold Industry Award 2017 in the Sustainable Innovations category, as one of the most innovative products of the industry.



Smart hangtags provide details on the origin of dye, tailor, fabric and the manufacturing facility, therefore providing 100% traceability of the production process. Scientific methods of assessing impacts of natural dyes vis-a-vis petrochemical dyes were used and these are made publically available on the website.



## Principle 2: Relevance



The claim highlights elements that make a difference to the overall sustainability performance of the product, in this case it is the dyeing of the Earth Chinos garments. The EarthColors® technology helps to reduce the water footprint and preserve natural resources, compared to conventional dyes that are made from petrochemicals that are known to be potentially hazardous to the natural environment and workers.

As part of ABFRL product stewardship initiatives, a study to understand the hotspots in the sector was carried out. As a result, water, energy and chemicals were found to be the highest impacts for apparel – and those are the issues addressed in this claim – making it relevant to the product and its supply chain.

## Principle 3: Clarity



The smart hangtags associated to each trouser ensure that the claim is for the specific product only and not for all clothing sold by the company. It is clear for the consumer that the claim is related to the dye used in the trouser.

The connection between the claim and the product is clear and additional details are available online to support a better understanding of the claim. Consumers can access detailed information in progress infographics and videos available online.

## Principle 4: Transparency



Confidential information related to the garments is not open to the public, but can be shared with a competent body to allow for auditing purposes. Earth Chinos provide consumers with details on the origin of dye, tailor, fabric and the manufacturing facility, through the smart hangtag on the garment. The developer of the claim and provider of evidence are published.

Although the method of creation of the dye is patented, information on the traceability and generation of claim (methods and sources) is published. It is clear how, and by whom, the sustainability claim was developed; and who provided the evidence behind the claim.



Example of a product communication, available at point of sale to consumers of the Earth Chinos, revealing more information about the natural dyes used.

## Principle 5: Accessibility



The smart hangtags are placed on the garment and therefore readily available to consumers at all times when in retail outlets. Further details on the claim are available on Peter England's website and through social media.

The smart hangtag, the website and social media channels make the sustainability claim clearly visible and easily accessible to consumers.

## Principle 6: Three Dimensions of Sustainability



**Environmental:** Using natural dyes leads to reduced chemical usage, water consumption and also reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

**Social:** The Life Cycle Assessment also addresses a social aspect, which is the less harmful impact on human wellness due to fewer chemicals.

Environmental is the main dimension that is communicated in the EarthChinos claim.



## Principle 7: Behaviour Change and Longer Term Impact



With this claim, ABFRL aims to promote the choice for clothing that is less intense in chemicals use, therefore encouraging consumers to play a role. Each pair of Earth Chinos comes with a plantable seed tag for consumers to plant, which also makes the tag 100% recyclable.

ABFRL's overall sustainability strategy through the ReEarth program aims at ultimately influencing behavioral change across the value chain, from suppliers to consumers. There is space for the company to address this aspect more comprehensively in this claim by giving instructions on the use phase for consumers, for instance.

## Principle 8: Multi-Channel and Innovative Approach



Different communication channels are used to convey the sustainability message: smart hangtags, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, company website, and communication in retail stores and through staff.

Consumers can interact with the brand through multiple communication channels. Also, the claim address consumers through different and innovative channels in different situations, such as [blog posts](#) and the electronic tags.

## Principle 9: Collaboration



The concept of the claim was developed by Peter England and Archroma.

Going forward, ABRFL could involve external value chain partners and NGOs as per the requirement and demand of product development and communication.

## Principle 10: Comparability



While the evidence of the claim is based on the benefits of natural dyes as opposed to petrochemical ones, this is not communicated to consumers as a comparative claim, i.e. the comparison is not made explicitly in the communications.

The natural dyes are compared with petrochemical dyes, using a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) approach. The impacts of using natural dyes compared with petrochemical dyes are provided as background information allowing consumers to compare. The LCA and comparative analyses for the natural dye is carried out by Archroma.



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