



Miljø- og  
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Miljøstyrelsen



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# WELL DRESSED IN A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

Overview of six projects carried out under the Nordic action plan for sustainable fashion and textiles



# INTRODUCTION

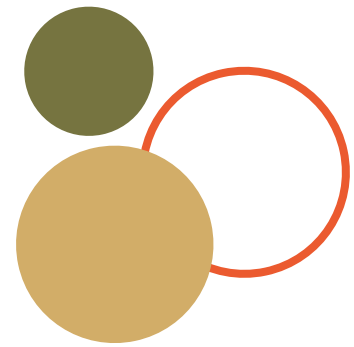
**In April 2015**, under the Danish Presidency, the Nordic Council of Ministers for the Environment launched the action plan for sustainable fashion and textiles - *Well dressed in a clean environment*.

The action plan included six initiatives to seed and inspire action to reduce the environmental impacts of Nordic design, supply and consumption of fashion and textiles.

All of these initiatives were subsequently translated into concrete projects initiated with funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers. These cover a wide spectrum of themes from encouraging greener procurement of textiles in the healthcare sector, to assisting design schools in the development and promotion of sustainable fashion design courses.

One thing that the six projects had in common is that they all initiated processes, platforms or networks that it is hoped will continue long after the projects themselves were finalised.

In this document we present short summaries of the background, objectives and outputs of each project and how they are being carried forward following project end.

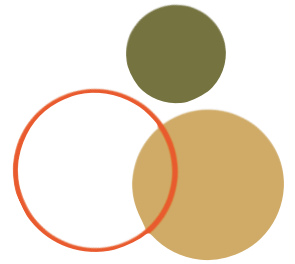


The projects are:

1. Promotion of sustainable Nordic design through education
2. Greater Nordic influence in the EU on harmful chemicals
3. Supplier requirements for sustainable textiles production
4. Green procurement of textiles in the healthcare sector
5. Promoting the supply of ecolabelled products
6. Stimulating the demand for textile to textile recycling



# PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE NORDIC DESIGN THROUGH EDUCATION



## Background and aims

Designers have a major role to play in shifting the fashion industry towards greater sustainability. A prerequisite is that they have an understanding of how to design for sustainability across the lifecycle of a textile product. While Nordic resources and teaching materials on sustainable design exist, these are fragmented. There is a need for stronger cooperation and coordination between Nordic actors to build up, share and streamline efforts in training and teaching.

The project's aims were to facilitate the establishment of a network of Nordic design schools to create a common Nordic agenda on sustainable design, and to establish a platform via which they can share information with designers and upcoming design students.

## Outputs

- A [digital platform](#) for schools and existing and future designers. The platform provides an overview of courses on sustainable textile design and other useful resources.
- An event at the Copenhagen Fashion Summit to launch the platform and further raise awareness of education and training in sustainable design of fashion and textiles.
- Establishment of a consortium of committed Nordic educators and stakeholders to establish a Nordic focus on teaching sustainability to current and future designers.

## Stakeholders

The project has been carried out by a Danish partnership of creative design studio Ironflag, digital bureau Strøm Works, fashionforum.dk and the Danish Fashion Institute (DAFI). The target groups for the project include design educators, and current and future designers and product developers with an interest in sustainable fashion.

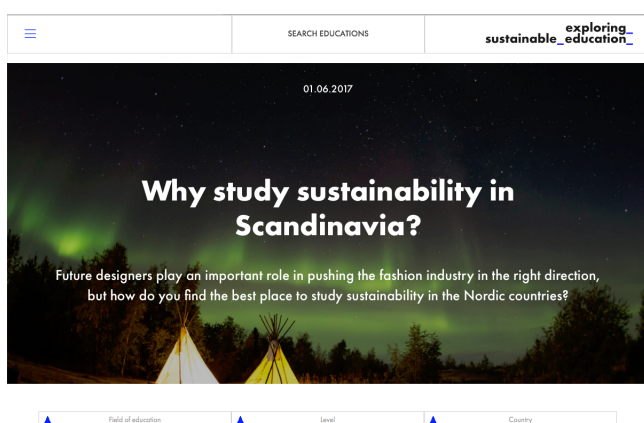
## Overview of activities

The project was commissioned in October 2016 and began with scoping activities to outline the content and format of the digital platform. Two webinars were held in February 2017 to gather ideas and wishes; one for educators in design schools and one for current and potential students. The ideas emerging from the two groups were surprisingly similar. This led to the development of a platform which at its core includes information, pictures and videos from Nordic design schools and the courses and training opportunities that they offer together with a search function. In addition it includes 24 news articles covering different aspects of sustainability and their relationship to design and a calendar where schools can upload coming events.

The digital platform was launched at an event - The Nordic Hour - held in May 2017 in connection with the Copenhagen Fashion Summit. The platform can be found at [www.sustainable-edu.com](http://www.sustainable-edu.com). Nordic design schools and industry stakeholders were invited and the event ended with a call to these stakeholders to commit to active engagement in the common effort to promote sustainability. On 9th November 2017 a seminar was held in Oslo with the purpose of clarifying how design schools and industry can work together and what areas and themes would be relevant to focus on. Ten Nordic design schools participated together with DAFI, Nordic Fashion Association and the Danish EPA.

## Into the Future

Following the Oslo meeting a consortium of the ten design schools, DAFI and the Danish EPA was formed to apply for support from Nordplus Higher Education program to continue the focus on how to teach sustainability.





# GREATER NORDIC INFLUENCE IN THE EU ON HARMFUL CHEMICALS

## Background and aims

A wide range of chemicals are used in textile manufacturing some of which can cause environmental or health impacts in different phases of the life cycle. It is difficult for actors along the supply chain including the final consumer to gain an overview of the potential content of hazardous substances in textile products since the supply chain is long, complex and global.

The project aimed to explore opportunities and needs with a view toward reducing particularly harmful chemicals in textiles and to give input to a common Nordic standpoint for declarations/labelling of chemical content in textile products on European markets. In addition, the project aimed to assist the Nordic region in contributing to the EU Strategy for a Non-toxic Environment as called for by the 7th Environment Action Programme, in the area of chemicals in textiles.

## Outputs

- A [report](#) which analyses the needs for, and barriers to, a legal requirement for declaration and/or labelling of chemicals in textiles and presents options for establishing a system of declaration and/or labelling within the EU.
- Nordic input to the EU on a future strategy for toxic-free trade in textiles which can potentially be implemented in the coming Strategy for a



## Stakeholders

A report was carried out by Swerea IVF (SE) with the informal *Nordic Group for Chemicals in Textiles* as a reference group. Stakeholders include producers and consumers, governments and relevant NGOs.

## Overview of activities

The project began with three activities: mapping chemical declaration/labelling initiatives in Europe and further afield; investigating consumer and end-of-life actor needs, and finally; mapping of chemicals used in the sector. On this basis the team assessed the advantages and disadvantages of declarations/labelling of chemicals in textiles. The analysis was published in July 2017.

The report recognised that changing legislation would require significant resources, but that the resources needed to ensure that they are implemented in value chains beyond Europe will be even greater. The report included two alternative proposals for legal requirements: use of the REACH legislation to require labelling and declaration of relevant harmful substances; or the creation of a new product safety regulation for textiles that could include CE-marking. Industry stakeholders in general favour the first option.

Nordic input to the EU took its starting point in a stakeholder workshop held in Reykjavik in September 2016. The Nordic countries subsequently sent a letter to the European Commission with inputs to the coming Strategy for a Non-toxic Environment. The letter included proposals to phase out substances of very high concern from consumer textiles, ensure textiles are used in a resource efficient way and to increase information for consumers on hazardous substances in textiles.

## Into the future

In addition to the letter sent to the Commission, the Nordic governments are involved in continued discussions within EU fora, providing inputs to the coming strategy. The outputs of this project will assist the Nordic governments' common work concerning chemicals in textiles and be considered by them when they determine how the Nordic countries can influence EU work in this area.

# SUPPLIER REQUIREMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE TEXTILES PRODUCTION

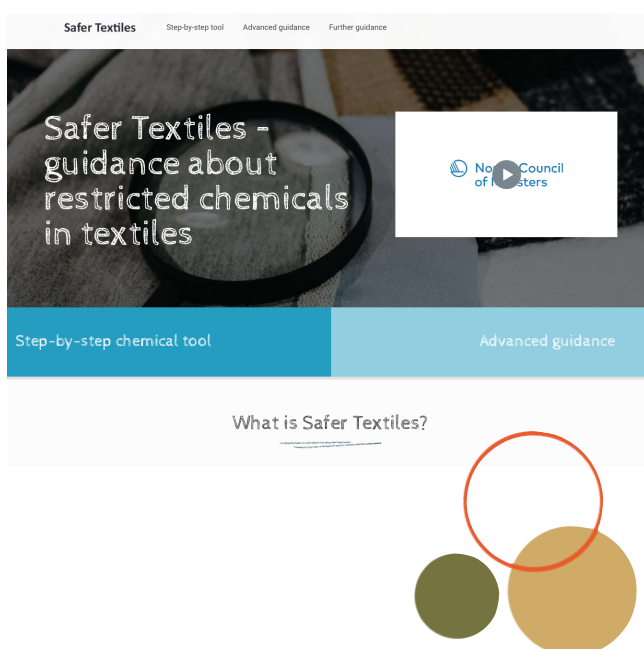
## Background and aims

Many impacts of textile products occur during production. However, long and complicated supply chains for garments can present a challenge to brands that want to engage in cleaner processes. It can be difficult for SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) in particular to establish and monitor requirements on complex issues such as chemical use in production.

This project aimed to assist Nordic textile companies in managing the use of chemicals in their supply chains. It was hoped that this would be the first stage in a wider transition towards common Nordic supplier requirements.

## Outputs

- A [Step-by-step guide](#) on control and management of sustainability criteria for chemical use in textile supply chains
- Proposed **Common Nordic Guidelines** on chemical restrictions in the for production of textiles that Nordic textiles companies can demand from their suppliers



## Stakeholders

The project was carried out by Compliance House and VIA University/VIA Design. The target group for the outputs are companies and particularly SMEs, and trade organisations in the fashion and textile industry.

## Overview of activities

The project established a network of textile trade organisations and companies across the region to support the activities in the project. Three network meetings were held during 2017.

In consultation with the network the project team mapped out and compared existing tools that assist companies in managing chemical use in supply chains. The team also surveyed textile companies on their needs and their use of existing tools. Small companies in particular reported that existing tools are often too complicated to use for people with little knowledge of chemistry, not user friendly and often expensive to access.

Based on these findings, the team developed a tool which better meets user needs. The tool has both a basic and advanced level, and the criteria in the tool are drawn from common EU regulations and national legislation in the Nordics.

The team has also developed a proposal for Common Nordic Guidelines on chemical restrictions in the value chain of textiles. These are based on the restricted substances list (RSL) developed by the Apparel and Footwear International RSL Management (AFIRM) Working Group. This RSL has been developed by a group of leading international brands.

## Into the future

The tool is to be launched in February 2018 and will be hosted by Compliance House at [www.safertextiles.eu](http://www.safertextiles.eu) for the first 18 months, during which period access will be free.

The members of the Network expressed an interest in continuing discussions though no formal procedure has been put in place.

# GREEN PROCUREMENT OF TEXTILES IN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR

## Background and aims

The healthcare sector consumes large amounts of textiles: staff uniforms, bed linen, patient clothing and operation room gowns. Placing green criteria in procurement contracts can increase the demand for greener textiles and textile services. This in turn should stimulate green innovation in supply.

Not all healthcare procurers have resources or knowledge available to apply green criteria in an optimal way. This project aimed to provide assistance to these procurers.

## Outputs

- A [Nordic Guide](#) on Green Procurement of Healthcare Textiles in Healthcare equipping healthcare procurers with information, resources and practical examples produced in English, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish and Finnish.
- A Nordic Network for Greening of Healthcare Procurement which it was hoped would continue under the umbrella of NCSH focusing on greener procurement of other products and services.



## Stakeholders

The project was carried out by PlanMiljø (DK) in partnership with TEM at Lund University (SE) who runs the Nordic Centre for Sustainable Healthcare (NCSH).

The project target group included healthcare procurers in regions, municipalities and individual hospitals and suppliers of healthcare textiles and other healthcare products. These stakeholders were represented in the Nordic network.

## Overview of activities

The first task was to find out how textiles are procured in Nordic countries. The team carried out an online questionnaire survey of procurers and produced fact sheets for each country summarising the findings.

A network of procurers was established and invited to **two network meetings**. The aim of the first meeting was to further investigate needs, and to examine what green procurement means in healthcare textiles. The project team developed a first guide for procurers, based on inputs from the network and literature studies. The guide was presented to the second network meeting to which suppliers were also invited and gave valuable inputs.

The project ended with a seminar in Stockholm where the final guide was presented and opportunities for continuing the activities of the Network were discussed.

## Into the Future

The Guide has been well received by procurers and also by procurement advisory bodies such as the Swedish National Agency for Public Procurement.

Efforts were made to continue the network into 2017 under the umbrella of the the Nordic Centre for Sustainable Healthcare. A network meeting was arranged in April and a further one on October. Interest in the October meeting was limited and it was cancelled. The main difficulties seem to be in shifting the network towards new topics and finding finances to continue the network for interested parties.

# PROMOTING THE SUPPLY OF ECO-LABELLED PRODUCTS

## Background and aims

Ecolabels such as the Nordic Swan Ecolabel and the EU Ecolabel can play an important role in reducing the environmental impact of textiles purchased in Nordic countries. However the supply of textiles with such labels remains low in Nordic countries despite significant growth in recent years.

The project aims to identify barriers to more ecolabelled textiles on the Nordic consumer market and initiate activities and actions to remedy these. The goal is to get a better selection of ecolabelled textiles and more visibility of these products in the market place. The project has also taken a global perspective, identifying how producers in e.g. India and Turkey can be encouraged to engage in ecolabelling.

## Outputs

- A **market analysis** with insights on drivers and barriers to a broader range of ecolabelled textiles
- **Four business cases** showcasing experiences producers have when utilising ecolabels
- An **action plan for the revision** of the Nordic ecolabeling of textile, hides/skin and leather
- **Marketing materials** to assist Nordic Ecolabelling in better communicating and marketing textile ecolabels to the industry



## Stakeholders

The project is being carried out by Nordic Ecolabelling with a subgroup of the *Nordic Sustainable Consumption and Production group* (HKP) as steering group. The market analysis was commissioned to marketing research bureau Kantar TNS. The target groups for the project are Nordic and global textile producers, brands, and ecolabelling organisations.

## Overview of activities

The project began with a market analysis of ecolabelled textiles with focus on the Nordic Swan. Kantar TNS carried out qualitative interviews with brands and producers in four Nordic countries and in India and Turkey.

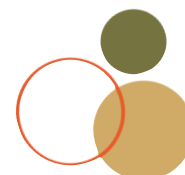
The objective was to identify what motivates companies to apply for licenses and what challenges they find during the process. Commonly reported challenges included finding resources needed to produce sufficient documentation and doubts that an ecolabel will give a market advantage.

Based on the analysis the team made a number of recommendations for improving the application process for the Nordic Swan and for increasing the market share. To address doubts over the market advantages they also prepared four business cases of companies that have gained benefits via ecolabelling their textile products.

## Into the future

The project will continue during 2018 with a consumer survey to ascertain the potential market segment of ecolabelled textiles, and the preparation of marketing materials to assist communication with the industry.

The recommendations from the project will be used in the revision of the Nordic Swan label for Textiles, Hides/skin and Leather. The recommendations will also be sent to the EU's Joint Research Council to assist in their review of the EU Ecolabel criteria for textiles.





# STIMULATING TEXTILE TO TEXTILE RECYCLING

## Background and aims

Recycling of worn-out clothing back into new textile products is a long-term sustainability goal for many in the textile industry. It would close material loops and reduce demands on virgin resources. However, there are a number of obstacles to textile-to-textile recycling and the demand for, and the supply of, recycled fibres remains limited.

This project aimed to increase knowledge among stakeholders of the opportunities for recycling and how these can be implemented. It focused on both ends of the loop. On the **Push** - textile products that are designed for disassembly and fibre recovery - and on the **Pull** - demand for recycled fibres in new products.

## Outputs

- [Case Wallet](#) - presentations of 10 Nordic brands that are engaging in design for recycling, in demand for recycled fibres and in closed-loop initiatives.
- A [deeper analysis](#) of challenges experienced by Nordic brands in forging pathways and the strategies and partnerships they developed to overcome these.
- **Matchmaking seminar, Stockholm, Sept 2017** bringing designers, researchers and suppliers of recycled fibres together to discuss Nordic opportunities for closing fibre loops.

## Stakeholders

The project was carried out by a Nordic consortium led by PlanMiljø (DK), with the Swedish Environmental Research Institute (IVL) and the Technical Research Centre of Finland (VTT). The target groups for outputs were clothing and textile brands and their designers, together with textile collectors and recyclers.

## Overview of activities

The team interviewed frontrunning Nordic brands, their suppliers and other key partners such as technological institutes. The interviews concerned how they are engaging in textile-to-textile recycling, obstacles they've experienced and how they have overcome these. Brands were also asked on future plans and how they see the industry as a whole moving forward.

Cases were made for the ten of the brands in a case wallet. The wallet was published in December 2017 and is intended to inspire other Nordic and European brands to engage in design for recycling and use of recycled fibres and materials.

A deeper analysis was simultaneously published in an accompanying report. This identified a number of common strategies for overcoming challenges such as increased costs when investing in circular thinking, matching materials to functionality and assurances that recycled materials do not contain harmful chemicals.

A seminar was held in Stockholm in September 2017, back-to-back with Mistra Future Fashion's annual conference since there were many common themes between this project and MFF's work. The seminar gave a forum for presenting cases and findings and bringing brands and suppliers of recycled materials together.

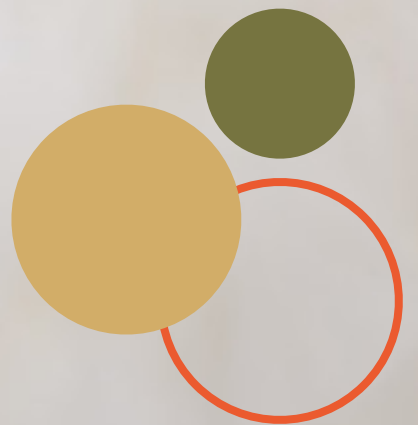
## Into the future

The key message for brands was 'get engaged now - don't wait for new technologies'. The publications give brands blueprints on how to do this and the brands that came to the seminar showed keen interest in engaging.

Some of the cases will be disseminated to more designers and brands via the sustainable design platform [designforlongevity.com](http://designforlongevity.com).







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