



BRITISH  
FASHION  
COUNCIL

# Institute of Positive Fashion Forum 2024

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Section 1

# Introduction



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# Introduction

In 2020, the British Fashion Council launched their world-leading sustainability programme, The Institute of Positive Fashion (IPF). Its mission is to establish a just and prosperous fashion and textiles UK economy, with a focus on decarbonisation and the circular economy.



The fourth annual Institute of Positive Fashion Forum took place on Thursday 18th April 2024 in London, designed, curated and produced by the British Fashion Council. The day, is part of the BFC's strategy which puts the BFC community at its heart, preparing businesses at all stages for positive change through embracing relentless innovation and fuelling responsible business growth.

We are facing a climate crisis; one that needs to be measured in human terms as a humanitarian crisis. The fashion industry has an enormous role to play in this, contributing to 10% of annual greenhouse gas emissions globally<sup>1</sup> – with huge impacts that have far-reaching implications on both people and planet. As we move away from an era of voluntary action on climate change to an era of one enshrined in law and regulation, we expect the landscape of fashion to shift drastically for industry players and consumers alike. These shifts will challenge us to adapt our thinking, mindsets and business models.

Through its IPF Programme, the BFC is focused on accelerating the foundations of a Circular Fashion Ecosystem<sup>2</sup> in the UK by 2030. The IPF Forum is an opportunity to bring together designers, brands, retailers, investors, academics, economists, government and policy makers and our BFC community so that everyone can play their part in helping to shape the future of the UK fashion industry.

The BFC continues to undertake action on climate and sustainability in a number of ways, with flagship initiatives to accelerate decarbonisation and circularity objectives:

- o The Low Carbon Transition (LCT) Programme is focused on helping the SME sector move towards net zero. The BFC is working closely with 50 businesses to establish a tangible roadmap which reduces carbon emissions across their supply chains, and also identifying ways to make their business operations more in line with circular economy principles.
- o The Circular Fashion Innovation Network (CFIN) is an industrial transformation programme led by the BFC and UK Fashion and Textile Association (UKFT) in partnership with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). The network brings together industry, innovators, NGOs, academia and broader stakeholders through an action-led roadmap to accelerate the UK to be a leading circular fashion economy.



The IPF Forum 2024 was curated with inspiring and thought-provoking speakers, with a view to instil a sense of duty, action and activism. The focus of the day was tangible actions for business, government and citizens and what stakeholders can do to move us forward to a lower carbon future, with circularity as a key framework for this change. The IPF designed and curated the event approach and content to foster collaboration, with global experts joining to share their knowledge to fast-track collective positive change through different dimensions:

- o Keynotes from thought leaders
- o Six hacks on industry's key issues, led by thought-provoking panel discussions from industry leaders followed by breakout sessions
- o The BFC's Future of Fashion Innovation Showcase
- o Closed-door, policy roundtables
- o Workshops by industry-leading organisations on key topics
- o Promote and celebrate BFC's work with Colleges Council through its Student Fabric Initiative.

This report presents a summary of the keynotes, the discussion from each keynote, and hack panel, and workshops outcomes from each of the respective breakout groups.

This is all detail to feed into our evolving Industrial Change Strategy for the UK, and for everybody to shape their own individual pathways for positive change.

Photographer: Lily Craigen





# Keynotes





# Keynote 1

## In Conversation with Paul Dillinger, Levi Strauss & Co

### Paul Dillinger

VP Head of Global Design & Innovation,  
Levi Strauss & Co

### Moderator: Shailja Dubé

Institute of Positive Fashion Lead  
British Fashion Council

Paul Dillinger highlighted that even iconic products, like the Levi's 501, can still be innovated with new technology with the planetary boundaries in play. Focus should be realigning design practices away from designing for immediate and ephemeral attention and, instead, truly designing for value. Real success is when a customer buys a piece, and they are not aware that they are wearing a piece of technical innovation and a truly circular product. He stressed the importance of being courageous: to be a provocative voice in the boardroom about growth in a finite world. If we use our shared voice to influence consumer behaviour, businesses will accommodate that - we must consider other levers other than just rewriting the business plan. Smart, sincere and authentic messaging can help to influence people on how to approach their own wardrobes. Businesses must ensure that they are not creating a marketing slogan around a single idea. Understand the complexity of the challenge, the solution set, and respect the intelligence of the consumer by presenting both. Businesses can bring community engagement into the design process by tailoring designs to meet the needs and skills of the local community. Embracing design in this way brings with it intention and constraint but, as

mentioned, constraint always delivers innovation. Dillinger also highlighted that beyond consumers and businesses, the third leg of the stool and critical in balancing us is good, sensible and strictly enforced regulation. Speaking to the recent news of Renewcell's bankruptcy, Dillinger made clear that the success of Renewcell's technology relied on a longer-term commitment from an industry trained to commit to nothing for more than six months. As such, the health of these kind of innovative approaches are predicated on behaviour that our industry is not positioned to execute. The story of Renewcell highlights the mismatch between investors and start-up businesses and the financial framework of how the fashion industry is set up. We must reconsider, as an industry, how we fund innovations and a wholesale change everywhere - policy, consumption, purchasing practices, design behaviours.



Photographer: Eeva Rinne



# Keynote 2

## Human Rights and Environmental Sustainability: The Time to Act is Now

### Baroness Lola Young

Member of House of Lords, House of Lords

### Simon Platts

CEO/Co-Founder, Re-Up Recomme

### Moderator: Sarah Kent

Chief Sustainability Correspondent,  
The Business of Fashion

Brands need to make a start with their Human Rights work throughout their supply chains – understand your supply chain and dual materiality, and strive for full transparency and traceability. New technologies and innovation can support this. Most good businesses are already halfway there so we must continue to work on the rest of it. Get your teams on board by thinking about what is coming in terms of legislation and regulation and focus on getting them over the line on commercials. Businesses must recognise that human rights and environmental sustainability are interlinked. For those businesses that find something unethical in their supply chain, it is essential that they ensure action is taken in a staged way, through responsible disengagement. Purpose and profit must be aligned and not dealt with as two opposites. Businesses can choose to ignore what they know but they cannot say they did not know.

For any companies that want to do business with any countries within the EU, you will have to satisfy businesses that you comply with new laws and regulations with strategies and plans that are implemented and monitored. Businesses should work with government to make sure that the right regulations are put in place. Legislation plays a huge role because it signals intent and must be harmonious with existing laws. This will enable the industry to be supported by the right legislation that forces a change. Governments must enforce robust legislation to ensure accountability and explore suitable mechanisms for this; for example, criminal penalties for non-compliance and significant fines.

The fashion industry must utilise its creativity and innovation to push the sector, and this will require making some sacrifices and changing its thinking.

Photographer: Eeva Rinne





# Keynote 3

## The IPF's Low Carbon Transition Programme

### Fionn O'Sullivan

Junior Product Developer, Molly Goddard

### Kyle Ho

Founder, KYLE HO

### Mica Phillips

Sustainability Manager, Margaret Howell

### Patrick McDowell

Creative Director, Patrick McDowell

### Moderator: Emily Chan

Senior Sustainability & Features Editor, British Vogue

The IPF's 's Low Carbon Transition Programme, will see the British Fashion Council support 50 London-based SMEs within the fashion and textile industry on the topics of climate change and circularity. Specifically, the programme will support these businesses to baseline their supply chain greenhouse gas emissions and implement decarbonisation plans.

Some learnings shared by the participants on the programme include:

- o Challenge the status quo by exploring new, circular business models that can be embedded into your business
- o Understand that carbon is one measure of sustainability and consider the nuance of other sustainability elements; for example, biodegradability.
- o Focus on the quick wins while also considering the more complex and larger elements of the carbon hotspots to focus on where to make your biggest impact.
- o SMEs should utilise their agility to act on climate change. Furthermore, designers can use creativity and innovation to support circularity.

Consumers have an important role to play, as their purchases affect the choices companies make. It is important to educate consumers about sustainable purchasing and consumption. Government must provide companies, especially SMEs, with the tools and guidance to help move brands towards incoming legislation. Standardisation, through legislation, is very helpful for brands to make progress on sustainability.

Photographer: Lily Craigen





# Keynote 4

## In Conversation with Mr Brunello Cucinelli

**Brunello Cucinelli**  
Brunello Cucinelli

Moderator: **Elizabeth Paton**  
International Styles Correspondent, New York Times



Brunello Cucinelli spoke passionately about his upbringing, growing up in the Italian countryside, living a simple life which instilled within him a deep appreciation for nature and the importance of beauty and harmony in all things. His experiences included observing his grandfather’s charitable practices which shaped his views on balancing profit with giving back to the community. He highlighted that it was his father’s struggles in a factory job that inspired him to foster human economic dignity in his work. The influence of philosophy in his life was evident, with him saying he was inspired by Immanuel Kant, particularly, ‘act always considering mankind as an end in itself and not as a means’. Cucinelli has a desire to create luxury products made in Italy and has a commitment to create something that is both beautiful and ethically produced. He also explained his belief that luxury epitomises moral good when created while respecting humanity and ensuring fair profit for all stakeholders. Cucinelli advocated living according to nature and upholding high ethical standards while promoting a form of capitalism that balances profit with ethical and moral responsibilities, ensuring that business practices benefit both the environment and humanity. Reflecting on his journey from a humble background to becoming a successful businessman, Cucinelli highlighted the value of maintaining one’s principles and integrity throughout.

Photographer: Lily Craigen





# Keynote 5

## Business Change Through Citizen Action

**Daze Aghaji**

Environmental Regenerative Activist

**Lucy Shea**

Group CEO, Futerra

**Tyler LaMotte**

Marketing and Product Director, Patagonia EMEA

Moderator: **Rachel Arthur**

Advocacy Lead, Sustainable Fashion, UN Environment Programme

At scale, demand from civil society is proven to help cause ‘tipping points’ to lead towards transformation. According to the IPCC, once 3.5% of the population are mobilised on an issue, far-reaching change becomes possible. Keynote 5 focused on how we drive advocacy by empowering consumers in their role as citizens to demand more from businesses and policymakers – something that is fundamental to driving change. UNEP published a playbook last year that focused on how we shift the narrative of fashion – both how we move away from narratives of overconsumption and more broadly, how storytelling and consumer-engagement can help contribute towards system change. The guidance highlights one key principle for businesses: motivate and mobilise the public to advocate for broader change. It is also highlighted that individual behavioural change will be insufficient unless it is embedded in structural and cultural change more broadly and anchored in policy and business shifts.

When we are active citizens, activism becomes second nature. It is critical to acknowledge our agency as consumers – this agency is a muscle that needs to be practised and tended to. It is important for consumers to recognise that every day we have the choice over decisions and good decisions are our prerogative; there is no other option. Government reflects what people want, so we – as citizens – can send back powerful messages to decision-makers, with the panel reminding us that the rise of veganism and banning of single-use plastics are both tangible examples of change driven by consumer demand. For businesses, focus must be on attaining a responsible growth that does not go beyond our natural resources. If businesses can find ways to talk about the functional, emotional and social benefits of climate action, the results can be transformational and will speed us up much more quickly.



Photographer: Eeva Rinne



# Keynote 6

## Thangam Debbonaire MP in Conversation with June Sarpong, OBE

### Thangam Debboniare MP

Shadow Secretary of State, Department of Culture, Media and Sport

### Moderator: June Sarpong

TV Presenter, Diversity Expert, Award-Winning Author and Former Director of Creative Diversity, BBC

In the final keynote of the day, we heard from Thangam Debbonaire, Shadow Secretary of State for Department of Culture, Media and Sport who highlighted that ‘fashion is a brilliant industry; it is a powerhouse of growth and jobs’. Thangam highlighted that people of all ages want to know that the items they are buying, and love, have not been produced at someone else’s expense. There is a growing market of people who want to make ethical choices. We must reshape what fashion does, by acknowledging and embedding the environmental and ethical challenges it faces whilst still making it a sustainable and growing industry. Ambition must be matched by action. There must be great, creative education opportunities for the next generation of the workforce to learn and be creative from an early age. We must think about the impact on landfill, and we must have a greater emphasis on re-use: lending as well as recycling is critical. At the same time, these options must work in a way that is most beneficial to the industry and that allow consumers to make smarter choices to invest in their clothing.



Photographer: Qavi Reyez





# On Demand Content

## Gabriela Hearst in Conversation with Sarah Kent

### Gabriela Hearst

Co-Founder & Creative Director, Gabriela Hearst

### Sarah Kent

Chief Sustainability Correspondent, The Business of Fashion

Gabriela Hearst has been running her brand for nearly a decade, starting out when the industry was not talking about sustainability at all but prioritising long-term view and sustainability as key principles. Hearst explained that there was a dysfunction between the contemporary world and the department stores who were pushing more volumes and creating waste. Hearst explained, “nothing hits you like seeing climate change in the place where you grow up” where she witnessed more plastic, less water and droughts. Following this, Hearst made a commitment to do things better, referring to her value system and the ranch she inherited from her father, which operates in cycles, circularity and the long-term.

Hearst explained that this value-system does not change wherever she works. Referring to her time as Creative Director at Chloe, Hearst explained that she made changes to make processes more sustainable, despite challenges she might have faced. She explained that whilst there was a resistance at the beginning, the business needed to change and so there was a willingness to change. There are millions of people impacted and displaced by climate change and businesses must employ those affected by climate change and find ways to integrate everybody into everything that we do. Whilst there is often a view that sustainable fashion is more expensive and therefore elitist, Hearst challenged this by saying that she grew up in a quality environment that was not ostentatious; on the ranch, things had to be functional and made to last.

Hearst highlighted that there are young people that are so motivated to work for purpose-driven companies. Businesses should hire strong and capable sustainability teams that will push you to have accountability - listen to them. Hearst said that often there is no ill-intent from companies but there is a lack of complete transparency within supply chains that causes this. Regulation is coming but businesses cannot wait until then.

Hearst’s involvement in conversations on nuclear fusion have allowed her to bridge the world between fashion, science and politics. It is these catalysts, she said, that brings people together and that there is more efficiency to be gained when we work together.



Photographer: Eeva Rinne



# On Demand Content

## Xiye Bastida: A time of transformation, creativity and new ideas

### Xiye Bastida

Climate Justice Activist and Executive Director,  
Re-Earth Initiative

On the day, we heard from Xiye Bastida, a climate justice activist from a small community in Central Mexico. Bastida spoke of the principles that have informed and grounded her activism.

Bastida's upbringing was filled with conversations on climate change after her parents met at the first Earth Summit in 1992. In 2015, when Bastida was 13 years old, she began to see the impacts herself when her hometown flooded. At this time, she also recognised that they had one of the largest industrial sectors in the country, producing pharmaceuticals, food and auto parts that created a lot of waste and pollution. These moments instilled a sense of duty for Bastida who decided that the only way to come to the climate movement, was with a strong lens of justice.

The first principle Bastida grew up with is reciprocity. She explained that if we give and take, it must be something that stays in a cycle – we can never take without giving back and that goes for land, community and ourselves. If we think of the fashion industry as a place that can truly act in reciprocity, fashion can give back and we can inherently change the way in which our systems operate and create thriving communities and societies.

The second principle she spoke to was one of intergenerational cooperation and wisdom sharing, explaining that it is only when elders share their wisdom and youth bring the energy, that societies can thrive and flourish.

The final principle is reverence. Bastida explained that we are here to be stewards on this planet, here to be protectors and some of us are here to be warriors, the highest level of protection that we owe to the Earth. Bastida highlighted that we are using Earth's resources 1.8 times faster than it can regenerate and that a lot of businesses and our economic model as society, is still based around infinite growth despite there being no place to grow into. We must go back to the safe operating zones of the planet for a chance of stability and true sustainability. Bastida highlighted that the only way we can chance systems is when we start focusing on regeneration in circularity and closed systems that can feed off each other instead of displacing.

Bastida explained that these indigenous principles can inform the way in which we relate to each other and relate to the Earth.



Photographer: Lily Craigen



# Hack Panel Sessions





Session 1

# Scaling Circular Design and Circular Business Models



## Context

Our industry is saturated with pilots, partnerships and proofs of concepts for circular business models and moving to circular product design. Action is being taken; however, scale and critical mass of circularity is far off. How might we help accelerate the scaled displacement of non-circular products with circular products in the marketplace? This session unpicked action across product changes, operational changes, and the importance of moving to circular services to reduce waste and preserve our planetary boundaries.

## The Panel

Moderator: **Yasmin Jones-Henry**  
Financial Times Writer and Co-Founder, The Lab E20

**Beth Wharfe**  
Director, Circular Business, Burberry

**Bilgehan Ates**  
Founder, Blackhorse Lane Ateliers

**Josephine Philips**  
CEO & Founder, SOJO

**Rosie Wollacott Phillips**  
Head of Sustainability, Mulberry



Photographer: Lily Craigen



## Panel Discussion Summary

### Businesses

The panel highlighted the importance of businesses needing to drive the scaling of circular designs and business models. The panel discussed some starting points for brands including the prioritisation of robust repair service options to meet customer demands. Marketing strategies should also be developed to educate their customers on the benefits of repair and encourage the use of preloved items. Incorporating the consumer into the business's circularity and sustainability mission is an important part of customer engagement. Blackhorse Lane Ateliers, as an example, hosts a pop-up every weekend to engage and interact with customers. Implementing key performance indicators (KPIs) and sustainability metrics can hold business units accountable for their circularity efforts. Collaboration between smaller and larger brands can foster innovative ideas and solutions. From a community and local business perspective, how can businesses work with local communities and designers to repurpose materials and reduce waste? By weaving circularity into the norm of fashion and actively engaging in circular practices, businesses are in a fantastic position to help drive cultural changes and create a more sustainable fashion industry.

### Government

The panel emphasised that the government has a crucial role in incentivising and scaling circular designs and business models. Legislative changes and incentivisation programmes can encourage businesses to adopt circular services, including repair, and to prioritise sustainability. Collaboration with industry stakeholders, such as the SOJO initiative, can help consolidate data reporting and accelerate the adoption of circular practices. The government should also consider providing support and funding for research and development facilities focused on zero-carbon footprint solutions and infrastructure for textile recycling. By working closely with businesses, universities and industry experts, the government can create an enabling environment for circularity and drive UK growth in the fashion industry.

### Citizens

The panel discussed how citizens have an important role to play in embracing and supporting circular designs and business models. How can citizens best recognise that product circularity should be a pillar of a business's sustainability strategy and therefore be willing to engage in brands that prioritise these values, such as repair and upcycling? An example given here is access to and active participants of repair services for bags and trench coats, offered by the likes of Mulberry and Burberry, respectively. Citizens should actively participate in upskilling opportunities to understand the value of repair culture and the benefits of owning items with a longer lifespan. Additionally, citizens can advocate greater transparency in the fashion industry by supporting labels that detail the costs of labour, textiles and transport, similar to the nutritional information on food products.





## The Group Discussion Summary

Following the panel discussion, the audience was split into groups to discuss two questions:

Q1

**How can business operations embed a circular design-first approach across all business units? (Including the use of low impact materials and circular product design principles)**

The groups discussed how businesses play a vital role in embedding a circular design-first approach by driving sustainable practices across all units. This can be achieved through various actions such as **investing in technology** to incorporate second-life items into product offerings, **exploring alternative business models** that prioritise experiences, and **collaborating within the supply chain** to implement sustainable practices. Conscious material choices; incorporating rental, repair, and resale options; supporting SME businesses; and engaging fabric mills as key stakeholders are additional steps towards minimising waste and promoting circularity.

**Demonstrating leadership from senior executives** and ensuring sustainability is at the heart of business strategies are crucial for industry-wide transformation. By taking these actions, businesses can drive the adoption of circular design principles and contribute to a more sustainable future.

Furthermore, the groups discussed the crucial role citizens

must play in embedding a circular design-first approach. By **teaching our youth the necessary skills** to take care of their own production and promoting repair and maintenance of clothing, we can foster a culture of circularity from an early age. **Choosing quality over the cheapest products** available is another important step, as it promotes durability and longevity, reducing the need for frequent replacements. Additionally, advocating education on circularity is essential, as we have unfortunately neglected to teach children how to repair clothes themselves. To further promote inclusivity, **de-gendering the sewing machine** can encourage equal participation in textile-related skills and empower individuals to engage in circular practices. By embracing these actions, citizens can contribute significantly to the adoption of a circular design-first approach and drive positive change in the fashion industry.

Q2

**What action should be taken by government and businesses to help scale circular services in the marketplace?**

To help scale circular services in the marketplace, both government and businesses need to take decisive action. The Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation<sup>3</sup> (ESPR), with a specific focus on textiles, provides a framework for promoting circularity and should be embraced by governments and businesses alike. France sets an example of leading practice with its specific regulations, such as Extended Producer Responsibility<sup>4</sup> (EPR), which increase accountability and shift the market culture towards sustainability. To ignite action from top executives, **there is a need for legislation** that sets the tone from the top and emphasises the importance of circularity. However, there is an identified lack of support from governments, particularly for small to medium brands which face challenges such as customer and freight fees without adequate government assistance or cost reimbursement.

To drive change, it is crucial to address the current market culture that views sustainability as merely a 'tick box' or a 'nice-to-have' rather than a necessity. This can be achieved by **increasing regulation, accountability and incentivisation**. Governments should consider implementing eco-modulation, adjusting VAT on second-life items, and providing support for recycling initiatives. Additionally, businesses should take reputational risks into account, as fines and legal implications may arise from non-compliance with circularity principles.

The amount of tax and duties imposed on returns prevents companies from effectively managing and reducing waste. Governments should explore ways to make returns more accessible for consumers, potentially through tax incentives or exemptions. **Collaboration between governments, businesses and industry stakeholders is essential** in creating a supportive environment for scaling circular services. By taking these actions collectively, governments and businesses can work towards a marketplace that prioritises circularity, minimises environmental impact and promotes a sustainable future.



## Key Emerging Themes

### Education and Awareness:

- **Businesses:** Educate customers through marketing campaigns about the importance of circularity and sustainable choices.
- **Government:** Implement educational programmes and initiatives to raise awareness about sustainability and circularity among citizens.
- **Citizens:** Promote education for children around circularity and sustainable practices.

### Collaboration and Partnerships:

- **Businesses:** Collaborate with industry and government to develop innovative solutions and customers to promote circularity within the fashion industry.
- **Government:** Foster partnerships with businesses to drive sustainable initiatives and circular economy practices. Promote sustainability initiatives to the public.
- **Citizens:** Engage in collaborative efforts with governments to promote sustainable practices and circularity.

### Regulation and Incentives:

- **Businesses:** Share business challenges and opportunities, to lead to regulations and interventions, implement sustainability metrics and take advantage of incentives to promote circular practices and sustainability.
- **Government:** Implement regulations and provide incentives to businesses to prioritise sustainability and circularity.
- **Citizens:** Advocate supportive legislation and incentives that encourage sustainable practices and circularity.



Session **2**

# Ensuring Clean Production and Green Growth in International Volume Manufacturing Markets

## The Panel

Moderator: **Brooke Roberts-Islam**  
 Founder; Techstyler, Senior Contributor, Forbes

**Dr Hakan Karaosman**  
 Assistant Professor, Cardiff University and Fashion's Responsible Supply Chain Hub (FReSCH)

**Dr R Sri Ram**  
 Founder of Bags of Ethics, part of the Supreme Creations group

**Salli Deighton**  
 Founder/CEO, LaundRE

## Context

Fostering cleaner production and promoting green growth in global textile and apparel manufacturing markets is of increasing importance to the sustainability agenda. This session discussed the pivotal role of cleaner production practices (for example, water and energy efficiency), use of innovative technologies and collaborative efforts in driving environmental stewardship, social justice, and achieving long-term sustainability across the industry's supply chain.





## Panel Discussion Summary

### Businesses

When it comes to the approach taken by business, the panel explored the question of whether we consider ESG in silos and focus too much on the environmental issues as standalone, rather than appreciating the connectivity between all three issues.

It was agreed that environmental and social justice issues are fundamentally inseparable as climate change creates intergenerational consequences.

As well as reducing silos, the importance of being holistic throughout the organisation and supply chain was highlighted, rather than simply looking from the top down. This led into points around decision-making within business. It was agreed by the panel that strong and clear decision-making around decision and production upstream were essential to facilitating the implementation of cleaner greener principles in manufacturing.

In addition to the framing of clean production and green growth in relation to ESG, the discussion highlighted the importance of businesses using appropriate metrics when trying to generate positive change. In the Global North, we are fixated on growth and measuring through GDP, but this is the wrong barometer of progress if we are looking towards a sustainable future. If continual increase in profits is the key metric for businesses which already feature incredibly high volumes, how can that be reconciled with the desire for more responsible manufacturing?

### Government

When it came to government influence, the key theme raised by the panel was around education and accessibility to information for the public, to create better behaviours from the citizens themselves, but also to create a 'pull' for better practices from business.

The panel explored the idea of developing government-sponsored programmes to enable education around circular practices and manufacturing impacts, and to demystify the second-hand market.

### Citizens

Climate change is an intergenerational issue whereby environmental and social justice are intertwined. However, citizens do not understand supply chains well enough to enable responsible purchasing.

The panel discussed the importance of an ongoing and transparent social dialogue. Good practice would involve consistently speaking with suppliers, but ensuring the right questions were being asked to pass on relevant information to citizens. This means investing time in providing context and comprehensible metrics to consumers, rather than simply regurgitating, for example, transparency measures that mean nothing to the 'average' person.

A specific challenge was raised around the fundamental cultural differences found in different geographies, and how in our Western society, circularity is not a natural part of how we live. The concept of circularity and communal society is far more intrinsic to Asia, Africa and South America. Waste is a good example; for example, Chile's uptake of Extended Producer responsibility (EPR). We cannot be lazy in assuming that our citizens will embrace or understand circular concepts in the same way.



## The Group Discussion Summary

Following the panel discussion, the audience was split into three groups to discuss:

**How can retailers and brands in the UK collaborate with their supply chains to ensure social justice and cleaner supply chains?**



There were five themes arising from the groups.

As with previous IPF Forums, **data and auditing** in supply chains was highlighted as a non-negotiable and collaboration becomes easier following transparency. Groups emphasised that data cannot simply be regarded as a 'tick-box exercise', but that it is a key enabler for measuring impact and provide opportunities for improvement.

The same point was made for the auditing process for supply chain stakeholders in that, when treated as a real opportunity and not just as a requirement, it can unlock real insight from those involved.

**Legislation** was, as in all areas, also looked to as a key enabler of increased collaboration in supply chains. Across the groups, this discussion covered two main themes. Firstly, the consideration of the size of a brand when setting legislation. It is not currently a level playing field for small enterprises when they are held to the same processes as larger brands who have much greater impacts. The second theme was in relation to accountability overall, where Forum participants believed that only mandatory measures would drive brands towards collaborating with suppliers at the pace that is required.

One group explored the idea that retailers do not have to tackle the challenge of supply chain collaboration alone. They should **seek support and collaboration from third parties** such as teams on the ground in their manufacturing locations, or international NGOs who know and understand the farmers, workers, etc.

A thread running through all themes was the importance of **trust** to enable positive collaboration. Linking to the point around data and auditing, it is much more effective to treat these practices as a mutual opportunity for improvement rather than simply putting supply chain stakeholders under examination. Trust also may lead to a greater opportunity to find answers and ideas from within the value chain itself, as stakeholders become more forthcoming.

One of the more provocative topics discussed across the groups was the impact that **increased pressure from consumers** could have in encouraging retailers and brands to collaborate more with their supply chains. A key barrier to this may be the current disconnect between citizens and producers. The groups asked whether more could be done to educate the public, which would in turn make them more active in discovering the impact of supply chains.



## Key Emerging Themes

### Holistic Approach:

- **Businesses:** Advocate a comprehensive, bottom-up approach to sustainability, not forgetting the intrinsic links between social justice and environmental issues.
- **Government:** Recognise the potential for solutions within the value chain, and address challenges beyond 'consumer behaviour'.
- **Citizens:** Engage in active dialogue with brands to create a 'pull' on bridging the gap between consumers and producers.

### Collaboration and Education:

- **Businesses:** Collaborate with NGOs and other organisations, and those 'on the ground' to drive meaningful change.
- **Government:** Develop government-sponsored programmes to educate the public across all ages, and invest in critical innovative technologies.
- **Citizens:** Embrace education and seek to understand the benefits of circular attitudes as part of our culture.

### Attitudes to Transparency:

- **Businesses:** With suppliers, re-frame the processes of data and auditing as an opportunity to grow and learn and to create a solid baseline for driving change, while ensuring metrics are understood by and meaningful for consumers.
- **Government:** Consider brand size when setting legislation to ensure smaller businesses are not being disproportionately affected when they have the least negative impacts.
- **Citizens:** Support businesses in providing meaningful information and enabling feedback loops.



Session 3

# The Business Case for Recycled Fibre Content

## The Panel

Moderator: **Adam Mansell**  
CEO, UKFT

**Annabelle Hutter**  
Managing Director, Säntis Textiles

**Catherine Loader**  
Ethics & Sustainability Manager (Circular Economy),  
John Lewis

**Helen Kirkum**  
Founder & Creative Director, Helen Kirkum

**Philippa Grogan**  
Sustainability Manager, Nobody's Child

**Sue Fairley**  
Head of Sourcing, Sustainability & Quality, New Look  
Retailers

## Context

This session delved into the compelling business case for incorporating recycled fibre content in the apparel and textiles retail sector of the UK, exploring the economic, environmental, societal and customer-consumer-driven factors stimulating the adoption of recycled materials by retailers and brands across the industry.





## Panel Discussion Summary

### Businesses

The panel emphasised that there is no single solution, and businesses need to integrate recycling, re-distributing, repairing and renting within their operations. This commitment involves simplifying fabric selection, engaging with suppliers and ensuring transparency in the sourcing of recycled materials. Developing a roadmap to understand and reduce business impacts was also discussed, with a crucial focus on lowering emissions and environmental footprint.

The discussion delved into the advancements in recycled technology and highlighted the need for investment and development in this area. While technology was identified as an important enabler, learnings from historical processes should also be recognised and inspire business models. An example of Italy's 200-year-old wool recycling practice was highlighted, where used fibres are re-used into new fabrics, eligible for the market again.

Collaboration among retailers was highlighted by the panel, as was the significance of partnerships that involve taking back products and, indeed, identifying the right partnerships to drive circularity and maximise the impact of recycling efforts.

### Government

Legislation was identified as a critical driver in encouraging consumers and brands to recycle. Clear regulations are needed to incentivise responsible practices and promote a culture of recycling.

Legislation is also necessary for digital product passports, infrastructure creation and funding to explore textile-to-textile recycling, which is key to reducing emissions.

### Citizens

The panel highlighted that consumers need to be engaged on the journey of circularity. There was agreement that consumers need to ultimately slow down consumption, utilise what they have more efficiently and consume in a more refined manner. It was also addressed that citizens have a duty to recycle in a responsible manner. An example was shared in the case of shoes: when any pairs of shoes are donated, the pair needs to be tied together, in order for them to be recycled or re-used effectively.

During the panel discussion, New Look shared insights into their sustainability strategy plan, which includes a focus on raw materials. They highlighted their progress in increasing the use of 'lower impact' materials from 2% to 72%. They expressed the need for innovative renewed recycled materials to further drive sustainability in the fashion industry.

John Lewis discussed their circularity and waste programme, which follows design principles such as durability and longevity. The programme aims to move away from the linear economic model of production, to embrace one which is circular and designed to last, be repaired, or be passed on to others before being recycled into something new. They acknowledged the trade-off between durability and increasing recycled content, highlighting the importance of finding the right balance.

Photographer: Lily Craigen







## The Group Discussion Summary

Following the panel discussion, the audience was split into groups to discuss:

**What is the business commitment needed to enable a viable business case for recycled content?**

The view from the groups was that for a viable business case for recycled content, businesses need to **embrace a multi-faceted approach** that includes streamlining processes, educating customers, addressing and understanding impacts, and collaborating with stakeholders across the supply chain.

From a digital infrastructure perspective, the metaverse was addressed and the need for businesses to utilise the metaverse to **create an online ecosystem** that connects retailers and recyclers, facilitating the exchange of requirements and promoting circular practices. Collaboration among businesses was viewed as necessary, in order to support and learn from each other on the circularity journey. Educating customers about the broader concept of circularity beyond recycling was also discussed as an important enabler to inspire society to develop a circular fashion ecosystem.

One group discussed the **need to collaborate and incorporate new talent;** for example, with universities. This is essential for driving innovation and staying at the forefront of circular practices and the latest innovations within the field.



## Key Emerging Themes

### Multi-faceted Approach to Circularity:

- **Businesses:** Embrace recycling, redistribution, repairing and renting within their operations.
- **Government:** Encourage legislation around post-consumer waste to promote recycling and engagement with recycling.
- **Citizens:** Take responsibility for recycling and engage with digital passports to support sustainable fashion.

### Collaboration and Legislation:

- **Businesses:** Foster support and collaboration among businesses on the circularity journey.
- **Government:** Adopt legislation for digital product passports, infrastructure creation and funding for textile-to-textile recycling.
- **Citizens:** Advocate legislation that discloses volumes of bought, sold and marked-down waste, and collaborate with brands to drive change.

### Consumer Engagement and Responsibility:

- **Businesses:** Educate customers on the broader concept of circularity, use digital product passports and align business interests with sustainable practices.
- **Government:** Incentivise consumers to recycle and engage with recycling initiatives and foster collaboration with brands.
- **Citizens:** Engage in the circularity journey, become advocates for sustainable fashion and take responsibility to recycle.



Session 4

# Our New Normal; Regulation-readiness to Drive Responsible Business Action

## The Panel

Moderator: **Rachel Arthur**  
Advocacy Lead, Sustainable Fashion, UN Environment Programme

**Cecilia Parker Aranha**  
Director of Consumer Protection, UK CMA

**Olivia Fulton**  
Associate, Mishcon de Reya

**Pauline God**  
Policy Manager, TrusTrace

**Rachel Franklin**  
Sustainability Lead, River Island

## Context

Durability, repairability, recyclability are core aspects of the EU strategy for sustainable and circular textiles. For UK companies that intend to do business with the EU, there are new regulations to be aware of which may come into play as early as 2025. This session will focus on the changing regulation landscape in the next two years, and what businesses need to do in preparation.



Photographer: Gavi Reytez



## Panel Discussion Summary

### Businesses

Navigating the maze of textile regulations demands a strategic approach and the right tools. Reporting compliance becomes manageable with available resources tailored for the industry. However, substantiating policies and 'green claims' requires solid evidence, emphasising the need for data-backed assurance. Brands and businesses within the fashion industry are crossing the Rubicon. It is imperative to start the journey towards compliance now, or face substantial legal, reputational and financial risks.

The digital transition brings its challenges; upgrading IT infrastructure and embracing digitalisation are essential for processing data efficiently. With numerous priorities vying for attention, businesses grapple with what to prioritise. Identifying overlaps between regulations streamlines decision-making and facilitates system-wide changes.

However, ensuring compliance is not just about data collection; it is about substantiating claims, implementing governance and exercising controls. Together, greater transparency, increased data capture, redefining supply chain engagement and due diligence will make the difference.

Brands must delve deep into their supply chains, gathering granular data to mitigate risks effectively, engage with consumers authentically and listen to their concerns. The key message is 'collaboration, not competition'. Only together will the industry drive innovation. Brands can, and are actively encouraged to, participate in regulatory consultations, rather than lobbying against change. The path to sustainable and responsible business practices starts today, not tomorrow.

### Government

Cross-governmental intervention and communication is crucial if regulation is to be effective; the priority must be to foster alignment between different regulations to prevent overwhelming and unachievable compliance burdens on businesses. There has been a general call for information and recommendations to governments, highlighting the challenges faced by businesses, particularly concerning the complexity of engaging with long supply chains and multi-brand retail structures.

Although upcoming elections in the EU may temporarily slow down regulatory communications, there was emphasis that businesses should continue to start preparing now to stay ahead of the curve. Once regulations are agreed upon, they will likely move swiftly, leaving little room for procrastination.

Industry stakeholders advocate alignment to streamline compliance efforts, recognising the inevitability of data collection regardless of regulatory differences. However, government support, especially for SMEs, is paramount to ensure a smooth transition and sustained growth within the industry.

Navigating these challenges requires proactive engagement and collaboration between businesses and regulatory bodies, laying the groundwork for a more sustainable and resilient textile industry.

### Citizens

The public is becoming more aware of sustainability and want more information on the products they buy. Often relying on brands to educate them, consumers want to know more about how their clothes are sourced, made and distributed, and what is important. As transparency grows in importance, regulation is following to demand the use of clear, accurate and relevant environmental claims to protect consumers. Good environmental claims that accurately convey the environmental attributes of products help consumers to make informed choices.

Ethical consumerism is a powerful tool of collective action used to positively influence brands and businesses to adopt more sustainable practices. This has increased the demand for dialogue and more detailed information on how products are sourced, made and distributed. Brands recognise the use of sustainability as a key lever for marketing and branding. Intentional or not, sweeping statements, the use of jargon and ambiguous terms regarding sustainability can often mislead customers as to whether a product is in fact 'eco-friendly' or 'sustainable'.

Businesses must take an inclusive approach to ensure that policies and protocols align with industry standards and regulatory requirements and should engage all stakeholders in decision-making processes, from senior leadership to marketing and design teams. By actively involving everyone who influences the product lifecycle, companies can foster a culture of responsibility and accountability.

Embracing these changes not only ensures compliance but also cultivates trust and transparency within the textiles industry. As the regulatory landscape continues to shift, proactive engagement and collaboration will be essential for businesses aiming to thrive in a sustainable future.



## The Group Discussion Summary

Following the panel discussion, the audience was split into two separate workshop groups, led by Mishcon de Reya, discussing and answering questions on regulation surrounding Ecodesign and Green Claims Directive:

Q1

**Ecodesign – How does your business prepare and who is responsible? What are the challenges and opportunities? What support do you need to comply?**

Reflecting on how fashion and textiles businesses prepare for different sustainability regulations, it is evident **that internal stakeholder alignment** and **strategic collaboration** are imperative regardless of the regulatory requirements. The eco-design discussion groups stressed the importance of **legal departments for ensuring compliance** and **marketing departments for communicating initiatives externally**. However, it is the endorsement by executives and senior leadership that ensures accountability across the organisation.

The technical requirements for eco-design principles necessitate a greater breadth of expertise and the deployment of specialist functions to overcome barriers related to intellectual property and privacy concerning product information.

Discussions between groups surfaced the different challenges and opportunities inherent in preparing for sustainability regulation. **Upskilling teams** and **ensuring clear communication** emerged as critical needs in the context of eco design. As the delegated act is not yet completely finalised, the group emphasised the need to be **proactive in preparing for compliance**. This includes initiating engagements to begin sharing standards and data across the organisation, ensuring consistency and transparency.

Due to the lack of clarity from the pending delegated act, businesses must navigate several challenges. Retailers managing extensive product lines are concerned with the need for detailed granularity in product information. Reliance on upstream suppliers to guarantee compliance unsettles businesses stocking products from numerous smaller companies. Therefore, given the significant hurdles of costs and privacy concerns, it is critical to properly communicate the standards and expectations around data requirements to overcome these challenges.

A significant challenge is the cost associated with developing Digital Product Passports (DPPs), as the data requirements present a substantial burden for some brands and stakeholders, especially when resources are stretched. Companies must gather solid data and simplify information sources to quickly access accurate data.

Despite these obstacles, there are opportunities for accountability in supply chain traceability, insights from data, and broader adoption of the circular economy, including support for beloved brands.

**Wider supply chain and ecosystem collaboration** present a real opportunity. **Rethinking engagement** with supply chain stakeholders can facilitate new lines of communication between SMEs, large corporations and public sector bodies. Although many smaller brands called on larger organisations to provide support, including finance and resources, group stakeholders emphasised the need for sharing knowledge and best practices.

By addressing these issues collaboratively and proactively, businesses can better navigate the complexities of eco-design requirements and enhance their sustainability practices. The groups surfaced solutions such as establishing community platforms and fostering partnerships with freelance experts, companies and material suppliers to help meet sustainability goals more effectively.



Q2

**Green Claims Directive – How does your business prepare and who is responsible? What are the challenges and opportunities? What support do you need to comply?**

When preparing for the **Green Claims Directive**, stakeholders working within the fashion and textiles industry emphasised the need for support from the legal department and endorsement from senior leadership. They highlighted **internal stakeholder alignment** and **strategic collaboration** as essential for **spearheading green initiatives**. A combination of oversight from the group entity or corporate functions and internal champions ensures a cohesive approach across the organisation. Comprehensive involvement throughout the organisation is crucial for **articulating a unified strategy** that embeds sustainability into the business's core practices. Despite differences between regulations, specific responsibilities underscore the need for a **cohesive approach** and a **commitment** to integrating sustainability into the fabric of their operations.

Challenges abound in compliance with the EU Green Claims Directive. Brands at **varying stages of understanding or maturity** may struggle to **provide data** due to their limited grasp on sustainability concepts. Executive buy-in and the presence of internal champions at all levels are essential but not always guaranteed. **Inconsistent and unverifiable data** further complicate matters, highlighting the need for collaboration and cooperation within the industry. Determining consumer priorities and understanding what they comprehend about sustainability pose additional challenges, as does the task of selecting which barriers to tackle.

Balancing **market value creation** with the **costs associated with compliance** adds another layer of complexity. Gathering relevant data from numerous sources and discerning the most pertinent information quickly can prove daunting.

However, amid these challenges lie opportunities for growth and improvement. **Upskilling and educating teams can empower them** to meet these challenges head-on. CFOs, equipped with financial insights, can be pivotal in driving sustainability initiatives forward. **Public accountability** and **consumer demand for sustainability** also present opportunities for businesses. Trust and transparency are paramount, as is the sharing of information and best practices within the industry.

To comply effectively, businesses require various forms of support. **Financial resources**, both internal and from government funding, are crucial, especially for smaller brands. **Effective communication** and messaging, originating from top leadership, are essential. **Clear guidance, actionable steps and comprehensive education** are necessary to navigate the complexities of compliance. **Collaboration with other brands**, company-wide buy-in, and establishing protocols for data gathering and verification are vital for streamlining compliance efforts.

The **path to sustainability compliance** in the fashion and textiles industry is fraught with challenges, but it also **presents numerous opportunities** for growth and improvement. There is no silver bullet for achieving sustainability within the fashion industry; sentiments from group discussions reflect the need to take a holistic approach – one that encompasses not only **regulatory compliance** but also **consumer trust, market value creation** (by committing to principles of the emissions reduction), circular economy, resilience and human sustainability.

By addressing these common challenges and seizing collaborative opportunities, businesses in the fashion and textiles industry can better position themselves to meet the demands of an increasingly sustainability-conscious market.



Photographer: Qavi Reyez



## Key Emerging Themes

### Communication and Engagement:

- **Businesses** highlighted the need to engage all stakeholders, from senior leadership to design and procurement teams, to ensure alignment with sustainability goals.
- **Government** representatives acknowledged challenges in obtaining information and stressed the importance of addressing competition, consumer protection and environmental regulations.
- **Citizens** emphasised the importance of specific and cohesive terms to avoid misleading green claims.

### Compliance and Opportunities:

- **Businesses** outlined the utilisation of available tools for reporting compliance, substantiating claims and prioritising these amid material considerations and overlapping regulations.
- **Government** officials emphasised the significance of aligning with EU regulations and providing support and guidance, particularly to SMEs.
- **Citizens** discussed the importance of taking actions based on stakeholder responsibilities and roles.

### Challenges and Support:

- **Businesses** identified challenges related to changing ways of working, upskilling teams and ensuring transparency and due diligence across the supply chain.
- **Government** stakeholders pledged support through financial resources, clear guidance, collaboration, education, and assistance with data gathering and verification.
- **Citizens** advocated knowledge sharing, collaboration and support for SMEs.



Session 5

# In Pursuit of Net Zero through Circularity

## Context

A stronger business case needs to be made between circular economy strategies and emissions reduction. While businesses are embedding climate action activities and forming net zero targets, quantification of emissions reductions through circular solutions remains difficult to establish and define. This should not halt effort or progress.

This session explored how circular economy solutions can be used as a tool to meet business net zero targets, and how we can improve the business case to government on the critical role circular solutions play in net zero pathways.

## The Panel

Moderator: **Kirsty McGregor**  
Executive European Director, Vogue Business

**Christian Tønnesen**  
Group Sustainability Director, Selfridges Group

**Jules Lennon**  
Fashion Lead, Ellen MacArthur Foundation

**Nicky Bunce**  
Sustainable Materials and Innovation Lead, Tapestry

**Nicoletta Sartori**  
Head of Sustainability, Benetton



Photographer: Eeva Rinne



## Panel Discussion Summary

### Businesses

It was clear the panel had accepted that businesses hold the most responsibility when it comes to driving net zero through circularity. There is a wide range of business activities and models that can be explored to suit various scales of brand, including eco design, repair, take-back, resell and innovation through circular materials.

Collaboration can be a way of increasing viability of some of these models; for example, creating demand for circular materials via textile markets. Collaboration across the business is essential when incorporating circularity, as it involves all aspects of operations and business models.

Design is the first step towards circularity, as this is where decisions occur that will impact the future of garments; for example, the recyclability or use-life of a garment. There are also emotional factors to consider with regards to how a consumer will perceive their garment's longevity both in terms of style and quality.

Better visibility of material through the value chain can be a valuable tool to improving the path to net zero via circularity. A lack of data only adds to the challenge of understanding impact, but the panel had observed a real absence of primary data and too many assumptions.

The panel challenged whether 'circular' had been consistently and well defined across the industry. It was the feeling of the panel that this responsibility sat within the remit of government rather than businesses.

### Government

For businesses and consumers to truly embrace circularity, the panel discussed a need for a unified and/or globally accepted definition of circularity and its impacts. This is something that was agreed to be lacking today, which means there is not a clear benchmark or vision of what 'good' looks like.

The use of incentives created by government could be an effective tool; for example, the provision of benefits for placing more sustainable products and packaging on different markets to help mitigate the additional costs.

Regulation and legislation would increase adoption of circular solutions and could be aligned with EU policy for consistency. The use of taxes and other interventions to uphold regulation, provided they were appropriate to the scale and context of a business, may also be welcomed by businesses.

The panel specifically honed in on waste as something government could support in impacting. Waste is a commodity and has the potential to create revenue and jobs, but the mindset of businesses does not always see it that way. Government-led education or schemes may be a way to unlock that.

### Citizens

Selfridges shared its definition of circularity, whereby it encompasses practices across the value chain including the use of recycled content, resale, rental, repairs and refills. They emphasised that for every tonne of carbon emitted in stores, there is 11 tonnes within the supply chain (upstream and downstream) which is therefore where the main focus must lie to have a real impact. Whether citizens are aware of this fact is questionable and presents a challenge.

Selfridges have found that the language used around circularity can be a driver of success; for example, language used to date had been more around 'minimising' or 'reducing', but buy-in is much better with the use of the word 'circular' – consumers are more engaged.

Ensuring consumer-facing initiatives are innovative and interactive, e.g. stock market in store, has generated improved engagement from consumers too.

Benetton explained that by providing timeless items to consumers, they are more likely to use them season after season. They also have a strong awareness of best sellers over the past four years, which they continue to provide to ensure consumers can always find their favourite items.

Benetton's engagement with consumers is strategic. They have developed a guide providing instructions on how to extend the life of garments; for example, how to make simple repairs.

Finally, through engagement, Benetton has found that knowing where and how garments are produced is important to their customer base, therefore effort is placed on transparency.

Consumer engagement and education was highlighted as an essential part of driving net zero through circularity. Consumer research via Coachtopia showed that consumers want a new bag every two years, but are keen for the product to be sustainable. Therefore, they appear to be placing the onus on businesses to provide sustainable solutions, rather than being prepared to change their own behaviours. This could be an indication that consumers have a lack of understanding on the relative impacts of behaviour.

Acknowledging that consumer education is likely to be a longer-term change, providing options in the short term like enabling consumers to resell via online platforms may be more successful than seeking to reduce overall consumption.



## The Group Discussion Summary

Following the panel discussion, the audience was split into groups to discuss:

**What circular economy practices can achieve emissions reductions as part of your net zero strategy? How can we overcome any associated challenges?**

The groups called out a number of circular economy practices, both consumer-facing and upstream in the value chain; for example, repair and resale services to extend the life of garments, as well as re-use of material during manufacture to use textiles that would otherwise have been wasted.

However, the conversation was quick to move to the challenges and key enablers. The first point raised was challenges and opportunities associated with different scales of business; for example, repair services become almost impossible for small businesses due to the relative costs, but small businesses can be in a good position to experiment and prove concepts. Is there a way for collaboration to unlock the barriers associated with scale?

**Legislation is, of course, a positive enabler for circular practices** but the groups reflected that it currently feels overwhelming and uncertain, calling out ESPR and Delegated Acts as specific examples. The groups were keen to see government support in the form of education and grants for brands, rather than just ensuring accountability.

**Collaboration is a key enabler to the success of many circular economy practices**, but the groups believed there has not been enough across the industry so far. In addition to the above point around leveraging advantages arising from differences in scale, potential solutions to issues with lack of consistency in communication to consumers were highlighted as a challenge that may be improved through collaboration. The observation from the groups was that brands are often setting their own standards; for example, they set a definition of what is circular and recycled – this can be confusing.

**Customer attitudes** were highlighted as an important challenge, as customers need to embrace the circular practices in order for these to succeed. In particular, a shift in attitude from buying in quantity to really loving items is a challenge to overcome. It was acknowledged that there will always be a desire for newness from consumers in addition to circularity and this must be carefully balanced. Informing strategy via consumer surveys was a proposed solution – by understanding consumers' motivations, practices could be shaped to be most impactful. Two-way engagement is crucial and effective storytelling can be leveraged to help change attitudes.

Other solutions to improve citizen engagement included the use of **government to educate people on the importance of circularity**. Targeting of the customer base was also flagged; i.e. the younger generation (Gen Z) will be the largest consumer base and engaging with them is important.

Finally, practical challenges around **profitability and commercial viability** were also covered. Groups had observed a disconnect between innovators and commerciality, meaning that ideas were not feasible to execute in practice. Potential ways to overcome this were around encouraging connected and multi-disciplinary teams within organisations and involvement of designers and innovators in commercial discussions.



Photographer: Eeva Rinne



## Key Emerging Themes

### Education and Awareness:

- **Businesses:** Foster collaboration and innovation to provide knowledge and support to consumers.
- **Government:** Introduce circularity education into the curriculum to raise awareness and understanding among the population.
- **Citizens:** Educate consumers on circularity and sustainable practices through storytelling and 'edutainment' to drive attitude and behaviour change.

### Policy and Regulation:

- **Businesses:** Collaborate and innovate to overcome challenges and drive systemic change in implementing circular practices.
- **Government:** Provide support, funding and incentives to assist small businesses in implementing circular practices.
- **Citizens:** Address the disconnect between consumer demand and actions through the implementation of laws and regulations that reduce fast fashion and establish circularity standards.

### Circular Business Models:

- **Businesses:** Implement circular business models such as repair, rental and resale to promote circularity and reduce waste.
- **Government:** Establish a clear and unified definition of circularity to guide policies and initiatives.
- **Citizens:** Encourage a shift in consumer habits from quantity to quality and promote responsible shopping habits that align with circular business models.



## Session 6

# Opportunities of UK Reshoring Alongside Global Markets

## Context

This session explored the opportunities associated with reshoring textile and apparel manufacturing to the UK, alongside global manufacturing, by examining the opportunities, complexities and strategic considerations involved in partially reshoring manufacturing within the textile and apparel industry.

## The Panel

Moderator: **Maliha Shoaib**  
Reporter, Vogue Business

**Hannah Phang**  
Co-Founder & CMO, The Now Work

**Rachel Walker**  
Founder & CEO, LLUK Textiles

**Simon Platts**  
CEO/Co-Founder & Consultant, Re-Up Recomme

**Taj Phull**  
Managing Director, H. Huntsman & Sons





## Panel Discussion Summary

### Businesses

UK fashion brands operating in the apparel production sector should look to continuously invest and upskill their workforce, as the panel discussed that these are key drivers of labour shortages and forced offshoring. By educating employees on production processes, businesses can ensure that their employees have the necessary skills to carry out their jobs. Providing opportunities for career growth and development will greatly benefit businesses, as career development and opportunities are highly correlated to talent retention.

Furthermore, the panel discussed the need for further investment in communities and talent initiatives, such as internships and talent programmes for young people, which can make the apparel manufacturing sector more aspirational. By providing opportunities for young people to learn about manufacturing and gain experience in the industry, businesses can create a pipeline of talent for the future. This can also help to address the skills gap in the industry, which has been a major challenge in recent years. Additionally, PR and marketing should be used to advertise manufacturing jobs as creative but still viable careers. Many people have a misconception that manufacturing jobs are low skilled and low paid. However, businesses can use branding and marketing to communicate that manufacturing jobs are creative, well paid, and offer opportunities for career growth and development.

Branding is also an important way for businesses to communicate their ethical and UK-manufactured products to consumers. By communicating these aspects of their products, businesses can differentiate themselves from competitors and appeal to consumers who are increasingly concerned about the environmental and social impact of their purchases. This can also help to build trust with consumers and increase brand loyalty.

### Government

The panel discussed how apparel production as an industry is highly competitive, and there is a race to the bottom globally. This has resulted in an unlevel playing field, where companies are forced to cut costs to remain competitive. They stated that it is crucial for the UK government to understand the limitations and capabilities of the UK manufacturing industry before considering reshoring. The government must assess the strengths and weaknesses of the industry and identify areas where the UK can excel. This will enable the government to make informed decisions and implement policies that will benefit the industry.

To encourage UK manufacturing, the government should leverage UK supplier relationships, as they can create beneficial pricing agreements that make UK manufacturing more competitive. This will not only benefit UK manufacturers but also UK suppliers, who will have a more secure customer base. Additionally, the government can support by providing tax incentives and funding to encourage UK manufacturing. By investing in the industry, the government can create a more stable and prosperous manufacturing sector that benefits the UK economy.

### Citizens

The panel opened the discussion by acknowledging that Brexit has caused a significant impact on citizens, as increased cost of consumer goods across the board is being passed on to consumers. The uncertainty surrounding Brexit has led to a lack of confidence in the UK market and increased the cost of doing business due to the introduction of various tariffs resulting in many businesses increasing their prices to cover their costs. Additionally, the logistics of producing and transporting goods have become more complicated, leading to longer wait times for consumers.

The cost control challenges are coupled with the increasing demand from citizens for ethically sourced and manufactured goods. Citizens are becoming more aware of the impact their purchases have on the environment and society as a whole and as a result are willing to pay more for this; therefore, there is a need for greater education and transparency on the higher costs associated with UK-manufactured, ethical products.

Despite the demand for locally produced garments, the panellists noted that many manufacturers have moved their production overseas, making it difficult for citizens to purchase locally produced goods. This has resulted in a decrease in the number of UK-made products available in the market. Citizens who wish to purchase locally produced goods may find it challenging to do so, as there are fewer options available. This trend has also resulted in a loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector, which has had a negative impact on the economy.



## The Group Discussion Summary

Following the panel discussion, the audience was split into groups to discuss:

**What are the opportunities, complexities and strategic factors involved in partially reshoring manufacturing within the textile and apparel industry?**

Partially reshoring manufacturing within the textile and apparel industry presents a range of opportunities, complexities and strategic factors that businesses, citizens and the government must consider.

The groups called out how citizens have an important role to play in supporting reshoring efforts by changing the mindset that assumes it is more costly to manufacture in the UK. Encouraging young parents to introduce their children to the textile industry can help to ensure the next generation has the skills and interest to support local manufacturing. Education and upskilling also presents a unique opportunity to shield against the outsourcing of manufacturing to other countries.

Reshoring presents an opportunity to support local businesses and communities while also promoting sustainability and ethical production practices. From a business perspective, the groups acknowledged how much complexity is involved in being able to begin to do so. While partially reshoring presents opportunities for businesses to diversify their product offerings and reduce their carbon footprint, the groups noted there are several challenges to consider: supply chain disruptions, cost implications and regulatory compliance. As a result of this, the groups felt that businesses should carefully evaluate these factors and develop a comprehensive strategy that aligns with their goals and values. Additionally, they called out how investing in funding and talent initiatives to encourage upskilling in the UK manufacturing industry and diversify the workforce can be complemented with marketing efforts to increase the desirability of the manufacturing profession.

The government also has a crucial role to play in supporting reshoring efforts. Initiatives to encourage upskilling in the UK manufacturing industry and marketing to increase the appeal of the profession are important factors. Making information about available resources and craftspeople more visible to the public would make sourcing easier. Funding that tops up wages in the industry, programmes promoting crafts and textiles in schools and apprenticeships, and VAT tax breaks for producers are all important considerations. Furthermore, there was a strong sentiment that financial incentives to encourage brands to use UK manufacturers would be beneficial.

Photographer: Qavi Reyez





## Key Emerging Themes

### Upskilling and Investment in the UK Manufacturing Industry

- **Businesses:** Invest in upskilling and training opportunities, making the textiles industry a desirable skill and job to have. Invest in your own people and see the rewards from this upskilling by providing training programmes and career development opportunities.
- **Government:** Increase funding for learning and development in UK textiles skills, particularly in areas such as circular design within the UK. Provide financial support and incentives for businesses to invest in upskilling programmes and initiatives.
- **Citizens:** Engage in upskilling opportunities available to fund demand from designers for UK skills base by actively participating in training programmes and acquiring relevant textile manufacturing skills.

### Culture Shift and Transparency:

- **Businesses:** Take more initiatives in-house to reduce costs, such as implementing in-house weaving or adopting innovative technologies like print-on-demand fabrics. Increase transparency and integrate sustainability practices to enhance UK production and communicate these efforts to customers.
- **Government:** Conduct a PR exercise to break the stigma around UK manufacturing, highlighting success stories and showcasing the positive aspects of the industry. Provide support for marketing campaigns that promote UK-based manufacturing and educate the public about the benefits of buying locally produced goods.
- **Citizens:** Encourage a culture shift by actively buying from the UK and accepting higher costs, understanding the value of supporting local manufacturing and the positive impact it has on the economy and environment.

### Diversification and Incentives:

- **Businesses:** Diversify product offerings in a way that encourages UK production, leveraging tech innovations like print-on-demand fabrics and exploring new manufacturing techniques. Consider how to cover funding transport and accommodation for UK-based textile experts to travel to brands and share their expertise.
- **Government:** Provide incentives to balance the cost of UK shoring and the cost of addressing circularity within UK manufacturing. Increase funding for learning and development in UK textile skills, including reskilling on circular design. Implement initiatives like topping up wages from minimum to living wage for textile workers to attract and retain talent.
- **Citizens:** Encourage young parents to encourage the next generation to explore the textile industry by promoting the creative and viable career opportunities it offers. Support talent initiatives, such as internships and talent programmes, to make the manufacturing sector more aspirational.



Section 4

# Workshops



Photographer: Gavi Reyaz



## Workshop Summary 1

# Proactive Compliance – How to Stay Ahead in a Complex Regulatory Landscape

delivered by TrusTrace

### Pauline God

Policy Manager, TrusTrace

### Shubham Kulshrestha

Head of Sales – Northern Europe, TrusTrace

### Agenda of Workshop

- o Proactive Compliance – How to Stay Ahead in a Complex Regulatory Landscape
- o The regulatory landscape in the EU and US
- o Laws categories by timeline
- o Laws categorised by topic of concern
- o Workshop, discussion and presentations
- o TrusTrace sharing success-factors from large-scale traceability programmes

## Context

There is an increasing regulatory pressure on the textile and apparel industry, but we also see the pressure for compliance is coming from consumers, investors and internal ESG ambitions. In this workshop we focused on some of the main regulations for global brands present on the EU Market, addressing what are the main challenges as well as what data are crucial to collect, how to get started and what successful traceability programmes look like.

## Summary of Key Takeaways

Some of the main challenges as well as the solutions discussed by the audience in the room were:

- o The large number of regulations, understanding and prioritising among them.
- o Having the right internal teams, and knowledge for the programmes to run successfully. One key takeaway was the necessity to have the C-suite buy-in and key managers involved at the very early stages.
- o Alignment of where the budget should lie, where the conclusion was it must be split between Sourcing, Sustainability, IT and Compliance.
- o Communication; clear communication across the organisation, with key KPIs and aligned goals for successful implementation, follow-up and measurement.
- o The key enabler for compliance; this was agreed as getting your data organised so you can deliver on all the regulations, not just one.
- o Start now and iterate as you go.



Photographer: Gavi Reyez



**Workshop Summary** 2

# Move To Action – Positioning Your DEI Strategy to Generate Growth

with The Outsiders Perspective

**Jamie Gill**

The Outsiders Perspective, BFC Board Member

## Context

Following the launch of The UK Fashion DEI Report by the BFC, The Outsiders Perspective and Fashion Minority Report in January 2024, this interactive workshop explored the steps businesses can take to reposition DEI as a timely imperative lever for business growth. It explored progressive actions for each of the strategic levers presented in the report:

1. Lead from the top
2. Get the data
3. Systems & pathways

Participants were asked to discuss and present back actions that can be taken including:

- o An immediate action – an easy win for business
- o A mid-term action – what would have the most impact to the most people and the suggested next steps
- o A big impact idea – what could a business consider investing in over the next 2-3 years as a measurable game changer

Photographer: Eeva Rinne





# Summary of Key Takeaways

## 1. Lead from the top

### o Immediate actions:

- o Training and upskilling leaders in DEI
- o Reverse mentoring within leaderships to understand the need to be allies and advocates

### o Mid-term actions:

- o Set targets and lay out tangible actions with a clear timeline

## 2. Get the data

### o Immediate actions:

- o Collect data as part of interview/onboarding process (e.g. 5-minute surveys, optional data collection).
- o Use systems and software that ensures data collection is anonymous.
- o Data collection should, where the region permits (i.e. UK) include race, gender, socio-economic, disability, sexual orientation questions. These should always be included with the option, 'prefer not to say'.
- o Employee Employee Resource Group (ERG) to encourage wider business to engage with company surveys. Explaining the use of data and why it is important and how it will inform positive change.

### o Mid-term actions:

- o Regularly collect data and measure progress over time
- o When implementing initiatives, ensure that measures are in place to see their impact and communicate on this.
- o Look at retention and attrition rates.
- o GDPR – comply to data protection and ensure data is deleted once reports are complete.
- o Customer research to inform communication and design.
- o Education Strategy – training for the whole organisation.
- o Communication.

### o Big impact:

- o Over time, seek to collect data industry-wide. Bringing data together through a third party to communicate industry-wide progress and help focus.

## 3. Systems & pathways

### o Immediate actions:

- o Identify and set clear business goals for DEI.
- o Mandate job roles to include 50% candidates coming diverse pools.
- o Identify and assess key partner organisations to fuel diverse talent pipelines.

### o Mid-term actions:

- o Develop the DEI Strategy working with internal and external stakeholders, based on business growth needs, identification of growth markets and fostering positive culture for employee retention.
- o Publish the DEI Strategy internally for clarity, transparency and update the business on the implementation plan.
- o Partner with organisations who can actively source skilled diverse candidates to join the business.
- o Ensure the onboarding process caters for diverse candidates from alternative industries.

### o Big impact:

- o A proud, bold target that is underpinned by a delivery strategy that is made public and centrally located on the brand's website that is available to download.



Section 4

# Conclusions



# Conclusions

As we reflect on our fourth Institute of Positive Fashion Forum, it is evident that the discussions have shifted towards a more proactive and outcomes-focused approach. Concrete milestones have been established, spanning the short, medium and long term, which signify a tangible progression towards the ultimate objective of establishing an equitable, inclusive and circular fashion ecosystem. To drive the industrial change needed, it is crucial to recognise that this transformation is not a destination but a collective journey that necessitates the collaboration and commitment of stakeholder groups across the industry: creatives, brands, legislators, academia and citizens alike.

From 2022 to 2023 we saw the benefits of convening and influencing industry via the IPF to drive change. We learnt that the industry was making progress in many ways, regarding the circularity agenda. Key themes that had emerged initially in 2022 were built upon to a more practical level of details and to tackle key challenges in the context of real business models. And now in 2024, we see the key themes discussed in 2023 coming to fruition today, including the regulation and changing legislation landscape and supply chain evolution through increased traceability. Momentum has advanced for the BFC's IPF Programme, which now incorporates initiatives such as the Low Carbon Transition Programme and Circular Fashion Innovation Network as two examples of industrial transformation and systems-level change that the IPF is uniquely positioned to help drive forward.

Because of this, the IPF Forum 2024 took on a new form: the discussion was intentionally structured around our three key stakeholder groups, Businesses, Government and Citizens, to transcend the practical insights in 2023 and generate a clear path for action-based outputs. While each group has their own defined action items, there are heavy interdependencies among them, and it will be imperative to remember that real change can only occur through unified actions and not to get stuck in silos.

The following action points for each stakeholder group to focus on in the coming year are as follows:

## Business

- **Take a holistic approach** across the end-to-end value chain, looking bottom-up as well as top-down.
- **Collaborate** across the industry to share knowledge and improve viability of circular business practices through scale.
- **Implement circular business models** such as repair, rental and resale to promote circularity and reduce waste.
- **Educate customers** in a language they understand and with a two-way dialogue.
- **Link circularity and decarbonisation**, as circular models and use of low impact materials in circular design can ladder up to net zero targets.

# Government

- **Provide incentives** to balance the cost of UK shoring and the cost of addressing circularity within UK manufacturing.
- **Increase funding** for learning and development opportunities for businesses and consumers.
- **Legislate and provide regulations** to guarantee accountability, taking into account the scale and nature of businesses.
- **Foster partnerships** and encourage collaboration with businesses and citizens to drive sustainable initiatives and circular economy practices.
- **Address different-sized businesses** with bespoke approach as SMEs have different challenges and opportunities from larger-scaled counterparts.

## Citizens

- **Participate** in educational and upskilling opportunities to understand the ways in which they can have impact.
- **Engage** in a two-way dialogue with businesses to provide feedback and create a 'pull' on sustainable practices.
- **Change behaviour and habits**, taking responsibility by buying for quality rather than quantity and supporting businesses with sustainable credentials.
- **Advocate** supportive legislation and incentives that encourage sustainable practices and circularity.



Throughout the coming year, the IPF Programme and IPF Forum will be able to continue to play a critical central-facilitator role in understanding and communicating how these actions come into being, continuing engagement with manufacturers, designers, retailers and government to progress to net zero and a socially just fashion industry.

The prevailing sentiment observed throughout the day was a shared desire among attendees, regardless of their stakeholder group, to drive positive change within the UK fashion industry. Most importantly, the radical optimism that we were met with radiated throughout all conversations and was truly inspiring, instilling the belief that such transformative change is indeed possible. Through this, it became evident that this change can only be achieved when stakeholder groups embrace the notion of collective action and recognise that progress is best achieved through collaborative efforts.

While it may be customary for government and business entities to view their peers as 'opposition' or 'competition', the IPF Forum serves as a powerful reminder that when individuals with the right mindset and attitude are brought together, meaningful conversations that pave the way for impactful change can ensue.

In retrospect, it is evident that significant efforts are required to transform the fashion industry into a sustainable, equitable and circular ecosystem. However, the responsibility lies with each stakeholder group to determine whether they will independently address the challenges posed by this mountainous task or collaborate with others to provide mutual support and assistance.

By weaving circularity into the norm of fashion and actively engaging in circular practices, businesses are in a fantastic position to help drive cultural changes and create a more sustainable fashion industry.



Photographer: Eeva Rinne



Section 5

# Appendices



# Glossary

## Brands

Producers of garments, who are responsible for the design and branding of products for the market.

## Circular business models (CBMs)

Such as clothing rental or subscription schemes, that minimise the material used and waste produced while maximising the value of materials and products by keeping them in use for as long as possible, if not permanently. These models promote a focus on the triple bottom line – people, planet and profit.<sup>5</sup>

## Circular design

Designing products and services in line with the principles of a circular economy involves using sustainable materials, eliminating waste and pollution. The goal is to preserve the value of a product or service for as long as possible through design strategies such as upgradeability, repair, refurbishment, and reuse. When end-of-life is unavoidable, the focus shifts to maximizing the sustainability of the process by designing for redesign, disassembly, and recycling. Circular clothing design specifically incorporates recycled and renewable materials, as well as designs for emotional and physical durability, reuse, repair, redesign, modularity, disassembly, and recyclability.<sup>6</sup>

## Circular economy

An economic system that eschews traditional linearity and is built on the principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems.<sup>7</sup>

## Circularity

The concept of goods, services and systems adhering to circular economy principles and therefore being suitable for consistent circulation within the economy.<sup>8</sup>

## Closed-loop recycling

A recycling system in which all the waste materials collected are converted into new materials that are of the same quality as the original input and can be reused in the same applications.<sup>9</sup>

## Consumers

Individuals who purchase goods and services for personal use.

## Designers

Individuals who produce designs for garments.

## Digital passports

A means of providing specific information for manufacturing and materials through every step of the supply chain.<sup>10</sup>

## Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR)

A new regulation by the European Commission intended to improve EU products' environmental sustainability, circularity, and energy performance.<sup>11</sup>

## Ecosystem

A dynamic network of interconnected actors operating within a bounded geographical space.<sup>12</sup>

## The European Union's sustainable and circular textiles strategy

A new strategy by the European Commission aiming to make the production and consumption of textiles greener, more resilient, and more competitive.<sup>13</sup>

## Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

EPR schemes make producers responsible for the disposal of post-consumer products and their environmental impact. In this way, it they are designed to incentivise producers to reduce waste through design and facilitate better waste management.<sup>14</sup>

## Government

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

## Green Claims Directive

A proposal created by the European Commission with the aim to stop companies from greenwashing, making false and or misleading claims about their products' environmental benefits or impacts.<sup>15</sup>

## Infrastructure

Both the 'hard' physical facilities and structures that underlie the operation of society and the 'soft' non-physical assets, including systems of government, education, and finance.

## Manufacturers

Businesses focused on producing fibres, fabrics, or garments at a set cost for retailers, brands, and designers.<sup>16</sup>



**Mechanical recycling**

A recycling process in which machinery physically separates and deconstructs waste textile material, typically through a chopping and pulling process, into shredded fragments until a stage is reached at which fibres can be recovered individually.<sup>17</sup>

**Non-rewearable**

The state at which garments are no longer fit for being worn on the body by consumers and has therefore reached its end-of-life stage.

**On-demand manufacturing**

A manufacturing and distribution model that prioritises flexibility, as only the exact and distribution quantity of goods are produced at the point at which they are needed.

**Product circularity**

The concept of a product adhering to circular economy principles and therefore being suitable for consistent circulation and reuse by consumers and/or businesses.<sup>18</sup>

**Product passport**

A concept in which a dataset for a product would be maintained to track it throughout its entire lifecycle. The dataset would include information concerning components; constituent materials and their sources; disassembly procedures; and recycling procedures.<sup>19</sup>

**QR code**

A matrix barcode that is a machine-readable optical label, typically storing information, such as website URL.

**Raw material circularity**

The concept of raw materials adhering to circular economy principles and therefore being suitable for consistent circulation and reuse by industry.

**Recycled inputs**

Synthetic or natural raw material that is derived from the recycling of used textiles and other fashion related materials and either suited to replacing virgin inputs for new clothing manufacturing or suited to use in alternative applications and industries.

**Recycling**

The process of collecting, sorting, and converting waste materials into new materials in order for them to be reused.

**Regenerative**

Enabling the preservation or enhancement of the planet's resources and environment.<sup>20</sup>

**Reprocessors**

Businesses focused on reprocessing, typically through recycling processes to convert waste material to reusable and re-merchandisable materials.

**Reverse logistics**

The process of moving goods from their typical final destination for the purpose of capturing value, or proper disposal.<sup>21</sup>

**Scope 1 Emissions**

Direct GHG emissions occur from sources that are owned or controlled by the company, for example, emissions from combustion in owned or controlled boilers, furnaces, vehicles, etc.; emissions from chemical production in owned or controlled process equipment.<sup>22</sup>

**Scope 2 Emissions**

Scope 2 accounts for GHG emissions from the generation of purchased electricity consumed by the company. Purchased electricity is defined as electricity that is purchased or otherwise brought into the organizational boundary of the company. Scope 2 emissions physically occur at the facility where electricity is generated.<sup>23</sup>

**Scope 3 Emissions**

Scope 3 emissions are a consequence of the activities of the company but occur from sources not owned or controlled by the company. Some examples of scope 3 activities are extraction and production of purchased materials; transportation of purchased fuels; and use of sold products and services.<sup>24</sup>

**Sustainability**

The state in which we are able to meet all of our needs within the ecological boundaries of the planet. These needs range from minimum standards for education, housing, social equality, income, and health to the basic provision of food, water, and energy. Meeting them within the ecological boundaries of the planet means that we must stop damaging and demanding too much of our planetary environment.<sup>25</sup>



**Sustainable development**

As defined by the Brundtland Report (1987): “[...] development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.<sup>26</sup>

**Synthetic fibres**

Fibres that are produced through chemical synthesis, as opposed to natural fibres (plantbased or animal-based) obtained from naturally occurring sources.

**Waste Framework Directive**

A framework establishing basic principles of waste management, including concepts and definitions related to waste management, recycling, and recovery.<sup>27</sup>

**Zero-waste manufacturing**

A manufacturing model that, in designing and assembling products, focuses on reducing and eliminating toxicity and waste throughout the process.



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