

Approaches for Circular Textile and Apparel Industry in India

Context

Production of textiles is a resource-intensive process, resulting in generation of solid waste. The industry also contributes 1.2 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases annually (*Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017*).

India's textile and apparel industry is the sixth largest in the world and a major contributor to global textile and apparel production. In 2019-20, it contributed to 2% of India's GDP (*IBEF, Oct 2020*). As a leading manufacturing and consumption hub globally, there is a need to re-think the way the Indian textile industry operates while ensuring profitability in the long term. Key stakeholders in the industry lack awareness to implement circular approaches, reduce textile waste, and create resource-efficient closed-loop systems. The Indian textile and apparel sector will benefit with the integration of circularity principles in business development.

Objective and Approach

The project is funded through the develoPPP.de programme that the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH implements on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Together with private sector partner Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited (ABFRL), the project is implemented by GIZ India in textile clusters in India's northern, southern and western states.

The project follows a multi-stakeholder approach and works with Government institutions, think-tanks, textile industry and leading brands, innovators, entrepreneurs, MSMEs, academia and civil society organisations.

The project objective is to strengthen and implement circular approaches in the Indian textile and apparel sector. This includes:

- Strengthening the capacities of the Indian textile and apparel industry to implement circular approaches and demonstrating pilot interventions.
- Introducing circular business practices through demonstration projects and preparation of voluntary circular business guidelines/CE manifesto for the textile sector in India.
- Institutionalising an industry-level platform for knowledge sharing, consultation, innovation, and collaboration.

Project name	Approaches for Circular Textile and Apparel Industry in India
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	India
Lead executing agency	Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited (ABFRL)
Duration	July 2021 – July 2024

- **RETHINK** textile and apparel processes, waste management and circularity standards
- **REDUCE** resource consumption across the value chain – **REUSE AND RECYCLE**
- **REDESIGN** material and process innovation into production
- **REVISE** circular business guidelines/policy for textiles and apparel sector
- **REBUILD** capacities and collaboration between public and private sector
- **REPLENISH** knowledge repositories for influencing local and global discourse



L. to R.: Handling and management of textile waste in clusters in Panipat, northern India; Display of packaging and stationery products made out of paper using recycled cotton scraps.

Activities

- 1. Demonstration Projects:** A baseline assessment study was conducted to understand status quo of the Indian textile sector and to identify three innovative interventions with potential to develop into demonstration projects.
- 2. Creation of Circular Textile and Apparel Guidelines for Practice:** This activity will focus on stakeholder engagement to develop the 'Circular Textile Manifesto', while also identifying key performance metrics to be used as a benchmarking tool for the industry. The partners will then focus on the dissemination of guidelines/manifesto to stakeholders in the industry for wider ownership.
- 3. Capacity development of textile stakeholders and suppliers:** The project aims to develop training and capacity building curriculum for the textile and apparel Industry, its suppliers across the value chain as well as textile workers to acquaint them with the principles and application of circularity. Training of trainers and collaboration with educational institutions will be essential in sustaining this initiative.
- 4. Knowledge Exchange and Dissemination:** This includes mapping best practices, sharing learnings with industry and non-industry stakeholders, advocating for policy change and onboarding potential partners to replicate and scale up this model of public-private cooperation.

Success factors

- 300 textile or apparel companies are trained on circular business models.
- 5 textile industry stakeholders participating in project activities implementing new circular solutions.
- 10 industry stakeholders at the national level have joined the working group on circular textile and apparel industry.
- 1 Circular Business Guidelines and a compendium of best industry practices shared with 5,000 stakeholders in the Indian textile and apparel industry.

An example from the field

In partnership with ABFRL and Center for Environment Education (CEE), GIZ India hosted an Innovation Challenge in April 2023 to invite innovators and entrepreneurs from across the country to share circular innovative ideas in the textile and apparel sector. The thematic categories included sustainable packaging materials, textile recycling and repurposing, digitalisation and traceability, end-of-life textile management, and innovative business model on circularity.

87 applications were received on the Leverist.de platform that hosted the challenge. The platform is operated by GIZ on behalf of BMZ. Three to four of these innovative ideas will be chosen for pilot projects by ABFRL, to be implemented in their retail brands and value chains.

Contribution to the 2030 Agenda



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