H&M group “Towards Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals” summary report 2011-2016

Background

H&M group together with Adidas Group, C&A, Li Ning, NIKE, Inc. and Puma formed the Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals (ZDHC) Program in 2011 with a mission of catalyzing the awareness level and driving more responsible practices within industry. Since then, more brands, different value chain affiliates and associates also joined this program.

As part of our shared commitment to help lead the apparel industry towards eliminating hazardous chemicals and to achieve zero discharges of such by 2020, H&M group developed together with the Adidas Group, C&A, Li Ning, NIKE, Inc. and Puma a joint roadmap in 2011.

Our approach

Since the early 1990s, we have applied the Precautionary Principle in our chemical management towards safe products, a safe working environment for workers in our supply chain and limiting environmental impacts.

This report summarizes our actions towards Zero Discharge from 2011 to 2016 and is divided into 4 parts covering: “Disclosure & Transparency”, “Phase Out/Manufacturing restricted list (MRSL)”, “Systemic Change” and “100% Circular”.

Disclosure & Transparency

Below are the main actions H&M group and our suppliers have done related to disclosure & transparency, listed by year.

2012

Together with C&A and G-Star, we conducted a pilot benchmark study to verify the use and discharge of the 11 priority chemicals. The pilot study verified that five out of 11 chemicals were still present in the wastewater after discharge.

2013

- Scaled up the benchmark study including strategic suppliers with wet processes. In total, chemical audits and verification tests were completed at 37 factories across Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia and India. The 11 chemicals data were disclosed on IPE platform.
- H&M published its supplier factory list.

2014

Continued to increase the number of wet process unit in discharge data disclosure on IPE platform. In total, 50 factories across Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia and India were involved.

2015

- 59 factories with wet processes disclosed data through IPE.
- Through extensive research we found that the Pollution Release Transfer Register (PRTR) is an effective method to prevent intentional use of hazardous chemicals in the manufacturing process. Inspired by the PRTR methodology, we developed a mathematical modelling together with Bureau Veritas, one of the global leaders in Testing, Inspection and Certification (TIC), to determine the chemical discharge performance in factories in a more comprehensive way.
- We launched the first pilot project for using this method in 8 factories located in China and Bangladesh. All factories were trained and required to submit all the relevant information for evaluation. This modeling method allows acquisition of comprehensive discharge information of factories. Read more about the pilot results.

2016

- 2016 ZDHC wastewater guideline is released and the H&M group was one of the supporting brands to streamline the implementation in a ZDHC pilot program.
- 67 factories with wet processes disclosed their discharge data through IPE.
- H&M group worked together with Bureau Veritas to develop Environmental Emission Evaluator (E cube) to measure chemical management performance in a factory. A pilot project was performed at 29 suppliers.

Phase Out/Manufacturing Restricted Substance List (MRSL)

In 1995, we have published our first Chemical Restriction list. Since then, we regularly update our public available list of restricted substances (both RSL and Manufacturing RSL), taking the intrinsic hazards approach into account based on precautionary principle.

2011

H&M made a detailed APEO investigation to assess the presence and source of APEO in the supply chain.

2012

An alternative list of water repellant finishes was published in 2012 for supplier to use.

2013

- We banned the usage of perfluorinated compounds (PFC) for all orders placed from 1st January 2013.
- We included the idea to base on stepwise approach in eliminating the hazardous chemicals from production line level and whole factory level. Clause 1: Substances are not allowed to be found in H&M production sites and used in H&M production and Clause 2: Substances are not allowed to be used in H&M production.

2014-2015

Expanded the MRSL scope to include chemicals beyond the 11 Priority Chemical groups.

2016

- The goal of the H&M group MRSL is to reach "clean factories". This is an approach that requires cooperation within our industry. Accordingly, we continue our work actively with ZDHC group as one of the co-lead for alignment in a one industry standard.

- PFC- phase out is published on Subsport.

- H&M group Positive List now contains 15 chemical suppliers who can commit that they fulfill the requirements of ZDHC and H&M's Chemical Restrictions.

- Investigated a scientific methodology, Green Screen, to evaluate the hazard assessment of better alternative and a user-friendly tool for supply chain to access. Piloting a Green Screen Hazard Assessment of the available alternatives at a common supplier with some of the leading brands within ZDHC.

- During 2016 H&M group conducted nearly 44,500 chemical tests at third party labs to ensure compliance with our Restricted Substances List (RSL) and even more tests were conducted on our supplier's initiative at third party labs.

Systemic Change to Create Awareness and Drive More Responsible Practice within the Industry

2011

H&M together with Adidas Group, C&A, Li Ning, NIKE, Inc. and Puma formed the Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals (ZDHC) Program with a mission of catalyzing the awareness level and driving more responsible practices within industry.

2012

H&M together with Adidas Group, C&A, G-Star, Li Ning, NIKE, Inc. and Puma released their first update on the progress in implementing the joint roadmap towards zero discharge of hazardous chemicals (ZDHC) in the supply chain by 2020 on April 24th 2012.

2013

- H&M joined 17 other brands in organizing two CNTAC ZDHC conferences to facilitate industry dialogue, promote industry collaboration, support from industry associations and engage with textile supply chains in China.
- The ZDHC Group continued to strengthen engagement and discussion around disclosure with IPE. Through direct, face-to-face meetings and discussions at key events including the October 2014 CNTAC meeting.
- Sustainability Apparel Coalition (SAC) and the ZDHC group further align a chemical management module and ZDHC audit protocol.

2014

- H&M and the ZDHC brands strengthened engagement with Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs (IPE) to discuss pollution disclosure
- ZDHC MRSL was released
- ZDHC is creating standard testing (collection, sampling, analysis) and reporting methods to provide consistent direction to the supply chain, where tremendous crossover between brands exists.
- H&M organized a stakeholder engagement event in Bangladesh 2014 to drive green chemicals import.
- H&M advocated towards the EU commission to strengthen regulatory requirements for hormone disrupting chemicals
- H&M launched the BMI (Better Mill Initiative) project in China

2015

- Partnered with SGS (one of the world's leading inspection, verification, testing and certification company) to develop Hazardous Substance Control (HSC) training. This training is designed for factory professionals to secure the foundational knowledge and know-how on chemical management.
- The ZDHC MRSL is continuously reviewed with the latest version including leather products.
- H&M continues to assist the Swedish Government to push for tougher EU regulations on chemicals in textiles.

2016

- H&M group joined the CNTAC ZDHC conferences in China, to strengthen our synergy with supply chain in China.
- To drive common practice within industry, H&M is working closely with the group in development of industry standards, systems and tools (e.g. ZDHC Gateway, wastewater guideline and alignment of HIGG index tool with ZDHC audit protocol).
- The H&M group became part of the ChemSec[1] business group - a collaboration between companies to inspire progress on the reduction of toxic chemical use.

[1] *http://chemsec.org/the-hm-group-joins-chemsecs-business-group/*

- H&M group actively engaged on the EU public consultation on the restriction of certain hazardous substances in textiles and clothing. We endorsed the restriction of the use of CMR (carcinogenic, mutagenic, or toxic for reproduction) substances in consumer products.
- Hazardous Substance Control (HSC) training is developed as partner with SGS and 124 factory professionals participated in HSC training on wet processing module. Best Chemical Management Practice (BCMP) guideline was published in our supplier portal.

Towards becoming 100% circular

2016

- H&M group set out the vision to become 100% circular and promotes a circular approach in how products are made and used. H&M works towards a clean, closed and effective circular life cycle for textiles, maximizing the utility and the value of the products. As part of this we have set a long-term goal to only use recycled or other sustainably sourced materials. We also implement a voluntary Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system that includes for example take-back and consumer textile waste collection systems, see separate document
- H&M group publishes approach to hazardous chemicals in recycled materials, see separate document.
- H&M group lowered our limits in final products for APEO and phthalates as a step towards zero discharge and 100% circularity.