

H&M “Towards Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals” summary report 2011-2015

Background

H&M 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 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 2015 and is divided into 3 parts covering how we have worked with: Disclosure & Transparency, Phase Out/Manufacturing restricted list (MRSL) and Systemic change.

Disclosure & Transparency

Below are the main actions H&M 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.](#)

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 repellent 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.

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.