

# FASHION TRANSPARENCY INDEX

---

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2021

The Fashion Transparency Index analyses and ranks 250 of the world's biggest fashion brands and retailers based on their public disclosure of human rights and environmental policies, practices and impacts, in their operations and in their supply chains.

# CONTENTS

- 03 About fashion revolution
- 04 About the index
- 06 Introduction
- 09 How brands and retailers are selected
- 11 The scope of the research
- 14 How the index has changed this year
- 16 Key findings
- 37 Key results
- 43 Quick findings
- 44 Final scores
- 45 Average scores across the sections
- 46 Spotlight issues
- 47 Case studies
- 50 *Viewpoint: Tamil Nadu Alliance*
- 52 Take action on transparency
- 54 Donate

# ABOUT FASHION REVOLUTION

Fashion Revolution works towards a vision of a fashion industry that conserves and restores the environment and values people over growth and profit. Founded in the wake of the Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh, Fashion Revolution has become the world's largest fashion activism movement, mobilising citizens, industry and policy makers through research, education and advocacy work.

The issues in the fashion industry never fall on any single person, brand, or company. That's why we focus on using our voices to transform the entire system. With systemic and structural change, the fashion industry can lift millions of people out of poverty and provide them with decent and dignified livelihoods. It can conserve and restore our living planet. It can bring people together and be a great source of joy, creativity and expression for individuals and communities.



# ABOUT THE FASHION TRANSPARENCY INDEX

**The Fashion Transparency Index is an annual review of 250 of the world's largest fashion brands and retailers ranked according to their level of public disclosure on human rights and environmental policies, practices and impacts in their own operations and in their supply chains.**

We focus on the biggest and most profitable brands and retailers because they have the biggest negative impacts on workers and the environment and therefore have the greatest responsibility to change.

Transparency is foundational to achieving systemic change in the global fashion industry, which is why we have been campaigning for it since 2014 and why we created this tool. Transparency underpins transformative change but unfortunately much of the fashion value chain remains

opaque while exploitation thrives with impunity. Transparency is a first step; it is not radical, but it is necessary. Transparency is not to be confused with sustainability. However, without transparency, achieving a sustainable, accountable and fair fashion industry will be impossible.

The Fashion Transparency Index reviews brands' public disclosure on human rights and environmental issues across 239 indicators in 5 key areas: Policies & Commitments, Governance, Supply Chain Traceability, Know, Show & Fix and Spotlight Issues, which this year are: Decent work, covering Covid-19 response, living wages, purchasing practises, unionisation and collective bargaining; Gender and racial equality; Sustainable sourcing and materials; Overconsumption and business models; Waste and circularity; Water and chemicals; Climate change and biodiversity.

# INTRODUCTION

The global fashion industry has been turned upside down since we published last year's Index in April 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, since then the industry has also backslid on many human rights and environmental issues. When lockdowns were announced in March 2020 and retail shops were shut across the world, **big brands and retailers cancelled orders** from their suppliers almost overnight. These were orders that were already in motion and in many instances, suppliers had fronted the cost of raw materials and labour. Products had already been made and sometimes even shipped, waiting at ports and in warehouses. Consequently, many suppliers and their workers went unpaid.

At the same time, many big fashion brands and their shareholders **continued to grow their huge profits**, despite millions of garment workers around the world having lost

their jobs, faced unpaid wages, experienced increasing food insecurity and forced to return to work, sometimes without proper PPE or social distancing in place, putting them at risk of contracting Covid-19. To say that the impact on the people who make our clothes has been devastating feels like an understatement. The imbalanced power dynamics between global buyers, their suppliers and garment workers has been cast in a particularly stark light this year and has magnified the outsized influence and impact of brands' purchasing practices on the working conditions, livelihoods and health of the people who make our clothes.

Meanwhile, the climate emergency still looms. In fact, over the past few months several new studies have been published indicating that the planet is reaching various climate-related tipping points faster than expected.

For example, the Arctic Sea ice is thinning twice as fast as previously thought. Oxygen levels in lakes are declining at rates between three and nine times faster than 40 years ago. A WWF report published last month has found that key species, such as penguins, puffins and snow leopards, are at risk of extinction if the planet heats above 1.5C, which has already happened in regions like Australia.

Research from the Global Fashion Agenda (GFA) and McKinsey estimates the fashion industry accounts for 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions and the good news is that many big brands and retailers are taking collaborative actions to reduce their emissions and achieve net zero in line with the Paris Agreement. This is happening through joint efforts such as the UN Fashion industry Charter on Climate Action, the G7 Fashion Pact, WRAP's new Textiles 2030 Strategy, among others. However, as we will explore later in this report, the fashion industry

needs to be bolder and more transparent about what they're doing to address the scale of the global challenge, especially when it comes to environmental impacts in the supply chain and the consequences of unsustainable production and consumption.

The other good news is that we have seen, and expect to see, a range of new laws and regulations that will require the global fashion industry to do more on human rights and environmental issues. For example, in the European Union this year we should expect to see companies being required to proactively assess, act and report on human rights and environmental risks throughout their supply chains. We will also see new rules coming in on how companies must deal with textile and clothing waste and new government policies on product design, production processes and mandatory product labelling when it comes to sustainability topics.

#fashionrevolution



**75% of suppliers reported  
that they have had to cut  
workers' hours as a result of  
buyer purchasing practices  
during the pandemic**

Centre for Global Workers' Rights

#fashionrevolution



**THE FASHION INDUSTRY  
RELIES ON 98 MILLION  
TONNES OF NON-RENEWABLE  
RESOURCES PER YEAR.**

Ellen MacArthur Foundation

# HOW BRANDS AND RETAILERS ARE SELECTED

The Fashion Transparency Index reviews and ranks 250 of the world's largest and most influential fashion brands and retailers. Brands have been on the following basis:

- Annual turnover over USD \$400 million
- Representing a spread of market segments including high street, luxury, sportswear, accessories, footwear and denim from across Europe, North America, South America, Asia and Africa.

As the biggest and most powerful consumer brands in the apparel industry, the brands reviewed in this Index have the most significant negative human rights and environmental impacts and an outsized responsibility to make

transformative change. Because they're so large and often profitable compared to the rest of the industry, with some of the world's wealthiest owners and CEOs at their helm, they have the resources and moral imperative to take meaningful action, not just on transparency, but on improving the human rights and environmental impacts at the very heart of their business models.

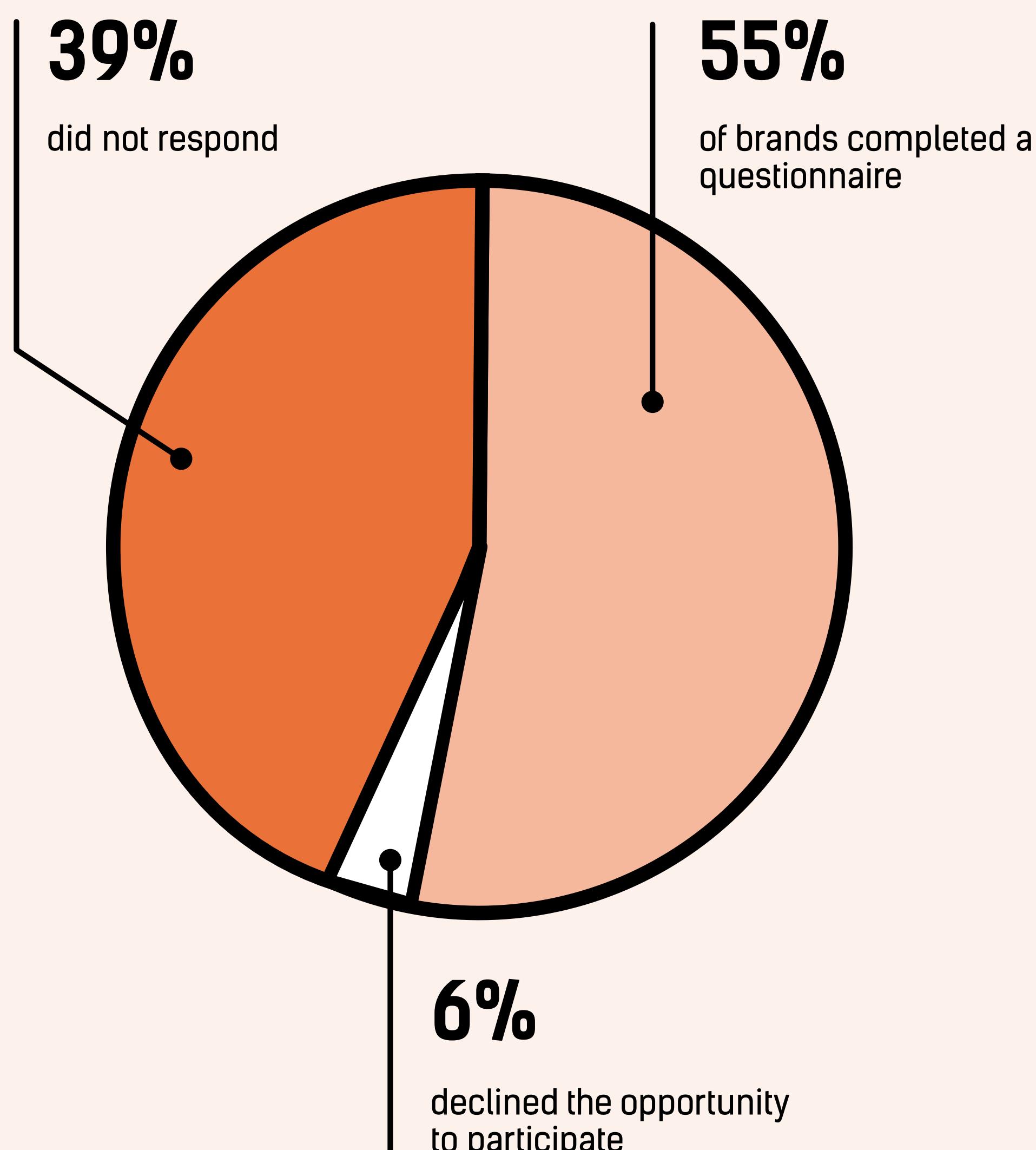
We have chosen to list brand names in this report rather than by parent company or controlling group because the public will be most familiar with the brands. However, please note that for some of the brands that are part of a bigger group, such as H&M Group, Inditex, PVH, Hudson's Bay Company and others, their scores reflect all brands in the controlling group regardless of whether they appear in this Index.

This year 55% of the brands and retailers reviewed participated by returning a completed questionnaire, up from 51% last year. We include brands in the Index regardless of whether they participate or not. We treat every brand the same regardless of whether they choose to participate or not. However, brands that participate typically

receive higher scores than they would otherwise because they are able to identify relevant disclosure that our researchers may have missed.

More information about why we target large multinational brands and not smaller more ethically minded brands can be found in our Q&As, see [this link](#).

## HOW MANY BRANDS PARTICIPATED THIS YEAR?



# THE SCOPE OF OUR RESEARCH

We have deliberately chosen to focus on transparency by means of public disclosure. If the information and data disclosed by brands is publicly available, detailed and specific enough, it can be used by multiple stakeholders – including worker representatives, environmental groups, investors, consumers and brands themselves – to drive positive change on human rights and environmental issues. This is what we are looking for and what the Index pressures and incentivises major brands to do.

Limited and inward-facing disclosure limits the scope for transformative impact. Public disclosure drives public accountability. For this reason, the Index purposely excludes everything that brands and retailers may be doing internally and behind-the-scenes across their companies and supply chains. This is also why we are looking for public disclosure not only on brands' policies, procedures and governance, which are less risky to share, but also meaningful disclosure of results, progress, outcomes and impacts across the business and its value chain.

---

**"The Fashion Transparency Index does not give you the low-down on where to shop. What it does do, is help you to hold brands and retailers to account for their claims. Use this information to charge your activism, not your credit card."**

Carry Somers, Co-founder, Fashion Revolution

## What the index does measure

-  The Fashion Transparency Index measures what brands know and publicly share about their human rights and environmental impacts across their value chains.
-  Credit is only awarded to publicly disclosed information/data on major brands' policies, procedures, performance and progress on human rights and environmental issues across the value chain.
-  We award points only for information/data that has been publicly disclosed on the brand or parent company's own website.

## What it does not measure

-  The Fashion Transparency Index does not measure impacts; it measures public disclosure.
-  Verification of claims made by brands and retailers is beyond the scope of this research, but we encourage stakeholders to use our research to hold brands to account on their claims.
-  The Fashion Transparency Index does not measure ethics or sustainability. We do not endorse any brand in the Index or suggest that consumers shop at specific brands based on their ranking. This is not a shopping guide.

## Information/data must be publicly available from one the following places:

-  On the brand or parent company's website;
-  Sustainability/CR microsites, provided there is a direct web link to it from the main brand or parent company website;
-  In annual reports or annual sustainability reports (only counted if dated January 2019 or later) published on the brand or parent company website;
-  In any other documents which are publicly available and can be downloaded freely from the brands' or parent company's websites; or
-  Via external, third party websites but only when there is a direct web link from the brand or parent company's website to the third-party website (e.g. Bangladesh Accord, Better Work, CDP, FLA, ETI, BSCI/Amfori websites) where specific disclosures can be found.

## We do not count the following information sources:

-  Clothing labels and hang tags on products
-  In-store or at other physical locations
-  Smartphone apps
-  Social media channels
-  A third party website or document where there is no weblink from the brand's own website, including press articles
-  Downloadable documents where the weblink cannot be found on the brand's website

# HOW THE INDEX HAS CHANGED THIS YEAR

Over the past year we have listened to our passionate community, conducted a detailed review of the Index (stakeholder interviews, social media feedback and media review) and have taken a range of steps to strengthen the methodology and push brands and retailers to go above and beyond policies and commitments towards more public disclosure on the implementation and outcomes of their efforts. We understand that policies do not always accurately reflect how a business is run, and this year we wanted to put greater emphasis on business action. To do this, we halved the weighting of the scores in Section 1: Policies and Commitments and gave more weight to indicators which focus on implementation and outcomes on issues such as supplier audits, living wages, purchasing practices, gender and racial equality and climate and water data in the supply chain.

Given the desperate situation that workers in the fashion supply chain have faced during the Covid-19 pandemic, we also added in six indicators specifically looking at what information major brands disclose about cancelled orders and the pandemic's impacts on supply chain workers, see pages 79–80 for the detailed analysis.

In an effort to further contextualise our research and address concerns over how our research is used, we have created Q&As to answer relevant questions see [this link](#). We have also updated our theory of change which explains why we do this research, its purpose and scope and how transparency is foundational to corporate accountability and change, see 19–23. Finally, this year we created communications guidelines for the brands and retailers reviewed to avoid this Index being misused by brands

for greenwashing purposes or misunderstood as a measure of ethics or sustainability, which you can [read here](#).

We are committed to calling out any brands that use their involvement in the Index to greenwash and will correct any misleading communications that we discover, as we have done in previous years where this has happened. If you see anything of concern being shared by brands about the Index, please let us know.

## WELCOMING YOUR FEEDBACK

We recognise that the Index is not perfect and can always be improved. We welcome any feedback or questions on the Index to [transparency \[at\] fashionrevolution \[dot\] org](mailto:transparency [at] fashionrevolution [dot] org)

# KEY FINDINGS

**Progress on transparency in the global fashion industry is still too slow among 250 of the world's largest fashion brands and retailers, with brands achieving an overall average score of just 23% in the Fashion Transparency Index 2021.**

Although the Fashion Transparency Index has pushed many major brands to disclose vital supply chain data information since it was first published in 2016, progress is too slow on key issues such as purchasing practices, living wages, overproduction, water use, and carbon emissions in the supply chain – even among the highest scoring brands.

Italian brand OVS scored highest this year with 78% (an increase of 44% from 2020), followed by H&M (68%), Timberland and

The North Face (66%). While 20 major brands score a 0% rating including, Belle, Big Bazaar, Billabong, celio, Elie Tahari, Fashion Nova, Heilan Home, Jessica Simpson, KOOVS, Max Mara, Metersbonwe, Mexx, New Yorker, Quiksilver, Pepe Jeans, Roxy, Semir, Tom Ford, Tory Burch and Youngor.

For another year, we have seen that major brands and retailers publicly disclose the most information about their policies, commitments and processes on human rights and environmental topics and significantly less about the results, outcomes and impacts of their efforts.

Major brands and retailers continue to disclose the most about their policies and commitments year-on-year compared to governance information, supply chain details and impact data. We see a lack of public disclosure across all major brands relating to

issues such as social auditing across the supply chain, living wages for supply chain workers, purchasing practices, unionisation, gender and racial equity, production and waste volumes, circularity, chemical use, deforestation and carbon emissions in the supply chain – all of which are urgent and important issues that need faster progress if we are to collectively “**build back better**” in response to the intersecting crises of climate change, Covid-19, systemic racism and global economic inequality.

Even though we see that many large brands publish time-bound, measurable targets towards improving human rights and environmental issues, these targets are more-often-than-not focused on outputs and processes (services delivered or actions taken) rather than aimed at achieving outcomes and impacts (the actual consequences or way things turn out), which would be far more meaningful and indicative of tangible change for workers and the environment.

**Supply chain disclosure continues to improve among major fashion brands and retailers, yet still only 47% of brands disclose their manufacturing facilities and about 1 in 4 brands (27%) disclose the wet processing facilities and spinning mills deeper in their supply chains.**

Major brands have a clear responsibility to look at their supply chain, identify human rights and environmental risks and impacts and address them. A lack of visibility of supply chains can allow exploitative, unsafe working conditions and environmental damage to thrive, while obscuring who has the responsibility and power to redress these issues. As a first step, brands and retailers need to understand and disclose their own supply chain – this means greater traceability and transparency is necessary.

The good news is that it's becoming more common for major brands to publish a list of their first-tier manufacturers, where the final stage of production occurs, e.g. cutting, sewing, finishing products and packing them for shipment. A decade ago, having public access to these factory lists seemed like an unrealistic dream for many NGOs and trade unions, but now nearly half of the major brands in this Index publish such a list, covering at least a core selection of their manufacturing facilities.

19 brands that were reviewed in last year's Index have since disclosed their first-tier manufacturers for the first time, including: Boohoo, Carhartt, Carrefour, Desigual, Dick's Sporting Goods, Dr Martens, Ermengildo Zegna, Fendi, Foschini, Fossil, Gucci, JD Sports, LL Bean, Mango, Miu Miu, Nordstrom, Otto, Prada and UGG. It is exciting to see several major luxury brands disclose their suppliers for the first time this year, marking an important step

forward in transparency from this part of the sector. We hope to see more brands follow their lead.

This progress is due in large part to building momentum – such as from our allies at the [Transparency Pledge](#), our own [#WhoMadeMyClothes](#) campaign and a recent [joint call to action among more than 30 civil society groups](#) including Fashion Revolution – that has pushed major brands and retailers to map their supply chain and show that they are doing so. Consumers, investors and even policymakers are also increasingly calling on companies to know and show their supply chains. See a selection of case studies on pages 24–25 on how NGOs and trade unions have been using transparent disclosure to address abuses and hold brands to account.

Further positive news is that we have seen many brands disclose an increasing level of detail about their manufacturing facilities, including site address,

number of workers, number of women and migrant workers, as well as a significant increase in these lists being published in machine-readable formats, thanks to the efforts of the [Open Apparel Registry](#). Having access to [machine-readable lists](#) means that the information is much more usable by a wider range of stakeholders, rather than having to laboriously trawl through and reformat the data to make use of it.

Disappointingly though, we are still seeing slow progress on the disclosure of production facilities beyond the first-tier of manufacturing, where millions of people around the world are working to produce and process the fibres and fabrics we wear, with just 27% of brands disclosing some of their processing facilities (3% more brands than last year) and 11% disclosing some raw material suppliers (4% more brands than last year). We would have hoped to see more progress from brands since publishing our [Out of Sight report](#) last year

in support of the [Tamil Nadu Declaration](#) and launching the [#WhoMadeMyFabric](#) campaign in April 2021. It begs the question, what do they have to hide?

We welcome the progress that has been made on supply chain traceability and encourage more brands to disclose, and for those that already do, to accelerate their progress towards a deeper level of traceability and more comprehensive disclosure.

**The cancellation of orders by major brands and retailers amid the Covid-19 pandemic placed immense financial burden on suppliers and workers. Despite this, just 18% of brands disclose data about their order cancellations in the past year.**

According to the [Centre for Global Workers' Rights](#)

(CGWR) and the Workers' Rights Consortium (WRC), who analysed accounts from garment suppliers and their trade associations, major brands and retailers collectively cancelled an initial USD \$40 billion in response to retail store closures and fear of lost profits. As a result, many suppliers were forced to close and unable to put workers on furlough, pay their wages, or provide severance pay. The people who make our clothes ended up bearing the heaviest burden of the pandemic, despite being the most vulnerable to its impact. Many workers went against lockdown protocols to protest the fact they had not received payment of their wages. Consequently, some workers took out loans and went into debt to afford basic needs like food and housing. Many faced increasing food insecurity, hunger, stress and fatigue.

Despite this dire situation, fewer than 1 in 5 major brands (18%) disclose the percentage of order cancellations they made

during the pandemic, while only 14% disclose the percentage of orders that were cancelled and not yet reinstated. When public outcry pressured brands to reinstate orders, some brands proposed that their suppliers accept heavy discounts on previously agreed prices, while others were threatened with cancellation if discounts were not accepted. To this point, our research found that just 14% of brands disclosed the percentage of discounts applied on previously agreed payment terms.

It should not have taken public pressure for these large and influential brands to reinstate their cancelled orders. On the contrary, their contracts should have been honoured in full throughout the pandemic, on the understanding that major brands are in a comparatively financially powerful position and their purchasing practices create ripple effects on suppliers and workers across the length of their supply chains.

**"I kindly request the fashion industry that is using the threads that I am making to be responsible and support for the change of the working conditions in the spinning mills."**

Kavitha, Tamil Nadu, India,  
garment worker

**During Covid-19, few major brands and retailers have disclosed worker-centred data, such as the number of workers laid off or paid late, which leads to an incomplete picture of the full socio-economic impact workers have faced throughout the pandemic.**

Shockingly, just 3% of brands disclose data on the percentage of workers who received late wage payments, suggesting that big brands may have limited knowledge on whether the workers in their supply chains have gone without pay during the pandemic. Meanwhile, only 3% of brands publicly disclose data on the percentage of workers laid off due to Covid-19, while millions of garment workers have lost their jobs in [Cambodia](#), [Indonesia](#), [Bangladesh](#) and [elsewhere](#). Although brands may be tracking this information, the lack of transparency leaves

the public with an incomplete picture of the catastrophic impact workers have faced throughout the pandemic.

Despite this, there have been [many reports](#) citing brands cancelled and reduced orders as reasons workers have lost their jobs or been unable to find work since the pandemic. [Further evidence](#) suggests that union-busting has become more prevalent over the past year, where dismissals have been made on the basis of union membership and non-union workers hired in their place.

Major brands and retailers should be monitoring and disclosing this data in an effort to be transparent about what impact the pandemic has had on the people making their products. Despite this, the public disclosure of supplier lists has helped trade unions and labour activists make the links between brands, their suppliers, cancelled orders and wage theft experienced by workers in order to demand accountability.

**Major brands and retailers have direct control over how they purchase from suppliers, and their poor purchasing practices can lead to human rights risks in the supply chain. Despite this, brands remain opaque about their purchasing practices.**

Better Buying data and extensive research from Human Rights Watch show that poor purchasing practices, including last-minute changes to orders or payment terms, can lead to devastating results for workers, including illegally low wages and unpaid benefits, excessive and even forced overtime, and temporary, precarious jobs. Despite these risks, only 3% of major brands are transparent about the changes they make to orders and payment terms after orders have already been placed.

**Ring-fencing labour costs** is one important way in which brands can ensure that workers' wages, including overtime and benefits, are not up for negotiation. Despite this, fewer than 10% of major brands disclose a method for ring-fencing labour costs and just 1% of brands disclose the number of orders they have placed where labour costs have been ring-fenced.

The vast majority of major brands expect suppliers to pay for the costs of production upfront, with suppliers typically purchasing materials for orders on credit, while they're not paid by brands until many months later. These payment structures are underpinned by imbalanced power dynamics between major brands, suppliers and workers. Fewer than 10% of major brands disclose a policy to pay suppliers within 60 days, while just 6%, disclose how long after delivery they pay their suppliers. It may come as a surprise that often clothes are being worn by

consumers before brands pay the factories that made them.

Disappointingly, this year there has been a decline in the number of major brands disclosing annual supplier feedback about their purchasing practices; from an already low bar – 5% in 2020 – to just 3% in 2021. Moreover, just 7% of large brands publish their standard supplier agreement, setting out typical order and payment terms and conditions. This information is necessary to scrutinise their purchasing practices and hold brands accountable for upholding their commitments to their suppliers and workers.

**97%**

of brands do not publish the percentage of workers that have lost their jobs due to the pandemic.

**The vast majority of the people who make our clothes are not paid enough to fulfil their basic needs, yet only 27% of big brands disclose their approach to living wages for workers in the supply chain and just 2 out of 250 brands disclose data on the number of workers in the supply chain who are actually paid living wages.**

Legal minimum wages in most production countries **fall woefully below a living wage rate** – an income that would enable workers to afford a decent standard of living including food, water, housing, education, health care, transportation, clothing and provision for unexpected events.

Wage increases are more likely when workers are freely and independently able to form and join trade unions and

work together to collectively bargain with their employers for higher pay and better working conditions. This fundamental right is something that 84% of big brands and retailers require of their suppliers according to their codes of conduct. However, fewer brands (10%) track and publish the number of workers in their supply chain that are unionised or covered by collective bargaining agreements and not a single brand we reviewed gives evidence publicly that the collective bargaining agreements in place in their supplier facilities provide workers with wages that are higher than the legal minimum.

It's not all bad news. Some progress has been made this year in that twice as many brands (4%) compared to last year (2%) publish time-bound, measurable strategies for how they will achieve a living wage for all workers across their supply chain. That being said, at this rate of progress the people who make our clothes seem

destined to be stuck with poverty pay for a very long time unless brands and governments do more to ensure that workers are paid fairly.

**A growing number of major fashion brands and retailers publicly disclose how executive level pay and bonuses are tied to human rights and environmental impacts yet their pay and performance reviews are mostly driven by other factors, such as profitability.**

There has been a steady and welcome increase in the number of brands disclosing how executive incentives, including pay and bonuses, are tied to improvements in human rights and environmental impacts. This year, one in five large brands disclosed that executive incentives (including pay, bonuses or performance reviews)

are tied to improvements in human rights and environmental impacts. Rising shareholder expectations of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors is likely to have contributed to this increase.

However, even when executive assessments (like pay and bonus reviews) consider environmental and human rights impacts, these issues are not top priorities and make up a minority percentage of the overall assessment. For example, typical disclosure is that around 15% of an executive performance review is tied to sustainability targets. We encourage brands and shareholders to prioritise and reward progress on human rights and environmental impacts as highly as other aspects of brand performance, such as revenue and profit.

**The vast majority of major brands and retailers require worker representation in supplier facilities (84%) but do not have worker representation on their own corporate board of directors (7%).**

Freedom of association requirements, including freely elected worker committees, are usually written into supplier codes of conduct as part of brands' purchasing agreements. 84% of brands include freedom association and collective bargaining in their supplier codes of conduct. Brands discuss the benefits this brings to supply chain workers, enabling them to feedback and negotiate directly with management. And yet, only 7% of brands disclose worker representation on their own corporate board of directors. Brands should hold themselves to the same, if not higher, standard they expect of their

suppliers; allowing employees in their own operations to also realise the benefits of worker representation at the top levels of decision-making on issues that affect them and their jobs.

**Major brands and retailers must go beyond saying that combatting racism is a top priority – and evidence this by addressing racial and ethnic inequality in their operations and supply chains.**

Recently, many fashion brands have been loud about supporting racial and ethnic equality – particularly in response to the Black Lives Matter and Stop Asian Hate movements that have gained global momentum in the past year. However, in contrast, we have found that only 12% of brands publish their actions on the promotion of racial equality in their operations. Just 16% of major

brands disclose the breakdown of job roles by ethnicity in their own operations, and only 2% publish ethnicity pay gap data within their supply chains. Solidarity and public support for racial equality, which can be a valuable PR tool for brands, must translate to accountable action on addressing racial and ethnic inequality in their own operations and supply chains.

Gender equality data is significantly more transparent than racial equality data. For example, 55% of major brands publish the annual gender breakdown of job roles within their direct operations, compared to 16% of major brands doing so by race. This is, in part, due to [gender pay gap reporting requirements in UK law](#) mandating this disclosure of companies with 250+ employees. This makes a compelling case for the value of legislation in increasing transparent disclosure, as well as the need for racial equality to be prioritised alongside gender equality in legislation in the UK and beyond.

## Too few major brands and retailers disclose crucial environmental data, despite the urgency of the climate crisis.

Although 79% of brands have published a company policy on energy and greenhouse gas emissions, fewer brands (58%) disclose a supplier policy on this issue and even fewer (30%) publish a time bound commitment on decarbonisation.

While there has been an increase in the disclosure of the annual carbon footprint within brands' own facilities and operations (Scope 1 and 2; 62% compared to 58% last year), transparency decreases the further down the supply chain you look (Scope 3), **where up to 80% of the sector's emissions occur**. For instance, only 26% of brands publish their annual carbon footprint at manufacturing level and just 17% disclose emissions at raw material level – where the greatest environmental impacts

occur during the lifecycle of a garment according to a **report by the Global Fashion Agenda (GFA) and McKinsey**. Furthermore, only 18% of brands publish data on absolute energy reduction in the supply chain, which is fundamental to reducing the industry's emissions.

Water is another critical issue for the fashion industry. Water pollution occurs across the value chain, from toxic agricultural runoffs, hazardous chemical use in dyeing and finishing processes to the release of microplastics when synthetic textiles are washed, and yet water pollution is often forgotten by brands as a salient risk in their supply chain. In fact, only 30% of brands are disclosing their commitment to eliminating the use of hazardous chemicals. Similarly, brands' transparency on water consumption decreases the further down the supply chain you look. For instance, 31% of brands disclose their water footprint within their own facilities but only 5% disclose their annual water footprint at raw material level.

Environmental data collection is standard practice in many industries and, given the social and environmental ramifications of the climate crisis, this is an urgent issue for the global fashion industry considering its significant impacts on the planet. Brands cannot demonstrably reduce their environmental impacts if they do not track this data across their whole supply chain and, crucially, share this data to enable better understanding among all stakeholders and the public on what work is being done and where more effort is needed.

**95%**  
of brands do not disclose their annual water footprint at raw material level.

**With more than a hundred billion pieces of clothing made each year, overproduction and overconsumption is harmful to the planet and communities around the world, yet major brands and retailers aren't doing enough to address this problem.**

Overproduction and overconsumption have been 'elephant in the room' issues for so long, yet big fashion brands and retailers have mostly ignored them. While a growing number of brands disclose investments in circular solutions that enable textile-to-textile recycling beyond reuse and downcycling (27% of brands compared to 18% in 2020), only 14% publish the annual quantity of products produced. This lack of disclosure masks the true picture of fashion's overproduction problem.

Take-back schemes have become increasingly popular among big brands in the industry, yet still only 32% of brands (up from 30% last year) have such a scheme in place, while fewer brands (22%) disclose what happens to the clothes received through such schemes. Research from [Oxfam](#) suggests that approximately 70% of all second-hand clothes donated in Europe are exported to Africa. Read more about this issue on page 92.

While it may be good news that more brands appear to be investing in circularity and textile recycling initiatives, this alone will not solve the industry's overproduction and overconsumption problems. Slowing down, making fewer and better quality products and extending the life of existing clothes and materials will be essential to the future of fashion and improving its impact on the planet and communities.

**Nearly half of major brands and retailers (44%) publish targets on sustainable materials, yet fewer than one-third (30%) define what constitutes a so-called 'sustainable' material.**

[Research has found](#) that over 70% of the fashion industry's emissions come from raw material production, preparation and processing, yet the environmental impacts of different fibres differ greatly based on how they're produced. For instance, conventional cotton production requires pesticides and irrigation systems which can damage human and ecosystem health, while synthetic fibres such as polyester are made from fossil fuels and release microplastics into waterways, contributing to oxygen depletion and ocean heating. Related to this, 39% of brands publish measurable targets for reducing the use of virgin plastics for packaging

but only 25% have targets for reducing the use of textiles made from virgin fossil fuels, while just 21% report steps taken to minimise the impacts of microfibre shedding.

More broadly, fewer than half (44%) of brands publish time-bound measurable targets or strategies on the use of more sustainable materials and only 37% report annual progress against these targets. With only 30% of brands explaining how they define a 'sustainable' material, clearly better legislation is needed to establish common standards on what constitutes 'sustainable' materials for the fashion and textiles industry.

To add some further context, research from **Mistra** suggests that there is a clear lack of environmental data which demonstrates definitive sustainability claims on specific materials. Brands need to measure and have access to reliable data which accounts for all potential environmental

impacts of a fibre, yet **Mistra's research** has highlighted that current data only covers a limited set of environmental impacts. This lack of credible and comparable information about what 'sustainable' material choices mean makes it difficult for consumers to make informed choices about the clothes they choose to buy and how best to care for the clothes they own.

**The UK consumes the most clothes in Europe yet major British brands are falling behind their European counterparts in terms of transparency.**

Fashion is one of the biggest industries in the UK and **the amount** consumers spend on clothing has quadrupled between 1998 and 2018, from £15 billion to £60 billion. Clothing consumption is higher in the UK than any other European country. **UK consumers buy on**

average 26.7kg of clothing per capita each year –where the next highest consumption rate is Germany (16.7kg), Denmark (16kg) and Sweden (12.6kg).

Given that British consumers are the biggest consumers, we would have hoped to see British brands and retailers take a lead on transparency.

However, not a single British brand or retailer has scored within the top 10 brands in the Index this year. Speedo, which has headquarters in Nottingham, is the highest scoring British brand at 53% (and has increased its score by 19 points this year) followed by Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer at 48%. It seems that several European brands have taken steps towards greater transparency that places them above their British peers, perhaps in preparation for the **forthcoming Mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence legislation** that is expected to be proposed by the European Commission in the coming months. Several American brands such as Timberland, The

North Face and Vans have also moved up this year disclosing more information than in previous editions.

**Despite progress made on transparency, better legislation is required to hold major fashion brands to account for their impacts on people and planet.**

Over the past ten years there have been a number of new laws and regulations coming into play across several countries that place human rights and environmental related requirements on companies. For instance, even though the **Modern Slavery Act 2015** in the UK has not been impactful in rooting out forced labour from apparel supply chains, this legislation has meant that companies who disclosed virtually nothing about their efforts on responsible sourcing now do publish some information which can be scrutinised by their stakeholders.

In the UK, companies are also required to publish annual gender pay gap data but this year during the pandemic [the government let companies pause reporting for 2019 data](#). As a result, we found that fewer brands (30%) published gender pay data this year compared to 34% last year. When British brands were let off the hook, even though they could have still voluntarily published up-to-date gender pay data, many of them didn't. It goes to show how crucial legislation is in forcing companies to do the right thing. And, the fact that key legislation is paused when perhaps it is most needed is hugely problematic, especially as globally women lost at least \$800 billion in income and 64 million jobs, according to [research from Oxfam](#).

This year we added new indicators on racial equality to the Index, and we looked to see if major brands disclose data on the racial/ethnic breakdown of their employees within executive, managerial

and entry levels. [In France and Germany it's actually illegal for companies to publish this data](#), which means that no French or German companies disclose this information. This certainly makes it difficult to meaningfully address racial equity in the hiring practices of companies if such legislation prevents advocates from having access to data that informs such important conversations.

In the latter part of 2021, we are expecting a range of different regulations and policies to be proposed by the European Commission that have the potential to create significant systemic change in how companies address human rights and environmental impacts across their value chains, from supply chain to product end-of-life. We can already surmise some of the effects of these incoming legislations. For example, an increasing number of major brands disclose information about their human rights and environmental due diligence

efforts (39% of brands in 2021 compared to 34% last year) while 26% publish the salient risks they found (compared to just 11% last year) and 24% describe the steps they have taken to address these risks (compared to 15% last year). The European Commission will propose mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation in the coming months.

The European Commission is also expected to propose a new **Sustainable Product Policy Framework** at the end of the year setting out standards on the durability, reusability, repairability, recyclability and energy efficiency of textiles. Related to this, our research shows that 44% of big brands disclose time-bound and measurable targets on increasing the use of sustainable materials, up from 42% last year, and 30% of brands explain how they define what constitutes 'sustainable' materials. On a range of human rights and environmental issues, it seems that many brands have more work to do to ensure

they will comply with these forthcoming legislations.

On a final note, all over the world we need legislation that prevents human rights and environmental abuses as well as requires companies to monitor and report the implementation and outcomes of their efforts to do so. When brands fail, there should be meaningful sanctions and reparations for harms done.

## **Information overload, data dumping and fluffy storytelling remains a problem among many major fashion brands.**

Some big brands communicate their human rights and environmental efforts in a way that is overwhelming, impenetrable, repetitive and difficult to find, making it virtually impossible for their customers and stakeholders to decipher information that is meaningful and actionable.

Sometimes crucial pieces of data are hidden in annexes and footnotes of long technical reports or buried dozens of clicks away from the homepage of brands' websites. Even for some of the higher scoring brands in this Index, it takes our experienced researchers many days and countless hours to read through all their communications to uncover what's relevant and actionable.

At other times, there is so much information to read through, which is mostly just nice sounding copy about brands' values or stories about pilot projects which relate to a tiny fraction of their supply chains, that it almost seems like a deliberate strategy to obscure and distract. **Recent research** by Changing Markets and the Clean Clothes Campaign reveals a mere 18% of consumers would trust sustainability information provided directly by brands themselves. This mistrust may stem from some brands' tendency to feature inspiring or fluffy story-telling more

often than reporting on actual systemic impacts and outcomes of their efforts.

Standardisation of credible, comparable disclosure of human rights and environmental impacts by major brands and retailers would be most welcome, and we hope that some progress will be made on this issue at a legislative level in the coming years.

**Greater transparency is only the first step towards making change in the fashion industry. Our call to action – do not use this Index to inform your shopping choices but please do use these findings to inform your activism.**

While we have seen many brands increase their level of transparency year-on-year, and we know that the Fashion Transparency Index has

influenced brands to share more information about what they're doing on human rights and environmental issues, this isn't nearly enough. Human rights and environmental abuses are still rife in this industry. Over half of the world's largest brands and retailers *still do not* disclose their suppliers. With an average score of just 23% in this index, many big profitable brands remain largely opaque about their efforts to address human rights and environmental issues.

We urge readers to use these findings to speak up and

challenge the big profitable brands and retailers on their claims, urging them to be more accountable and prove that they're making changes in reality and not just on paper. Please also use these findings to contact lawmakers where you live to demand better laws that make big brands accountable for their human rights and environmental impacts. To read more about what you can do with these findings – whether you're an individual, brand or retailer, policymaker, investor, NGO or trade union – please see pages 100–104 of the [full report](#).

---

**"Awareness is key. In the absence of information, none of us know what is happening and what could be jeopardizing our health, our water supply, and our planet."**

**Erin Brockovich**

# KEY RESULTS

To access the complete data set  
[click here.](#)

View all the underlying data for  
all 250 brands on [Wikirate.org](#)

# KEY RESULTS

**23%**

**overall average score  
across the 250 brands  
reviewed in 2021**

**23%**

**overall average score across  
the 239 brands reviewed  
since 2020**

— No increase since 2020

**25%**

**Overall average score across  
the 188 brands reviewed  
since 2019**

↑ Up 2 points since 2019

**28%**

**overall average score across  
the 139 brands reviewed  
since 2018**

↑ Up 6 points since 2018

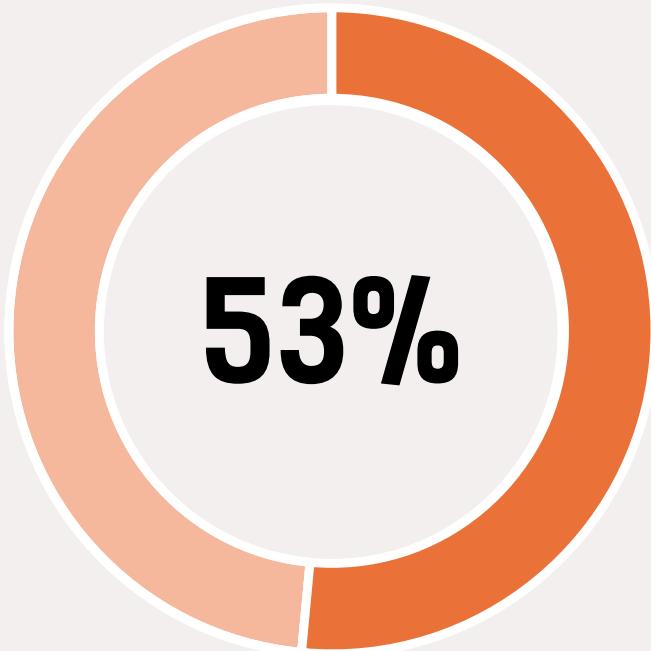
**31%**

**overall average score across  
the 92 brands reviewed since  
2017**

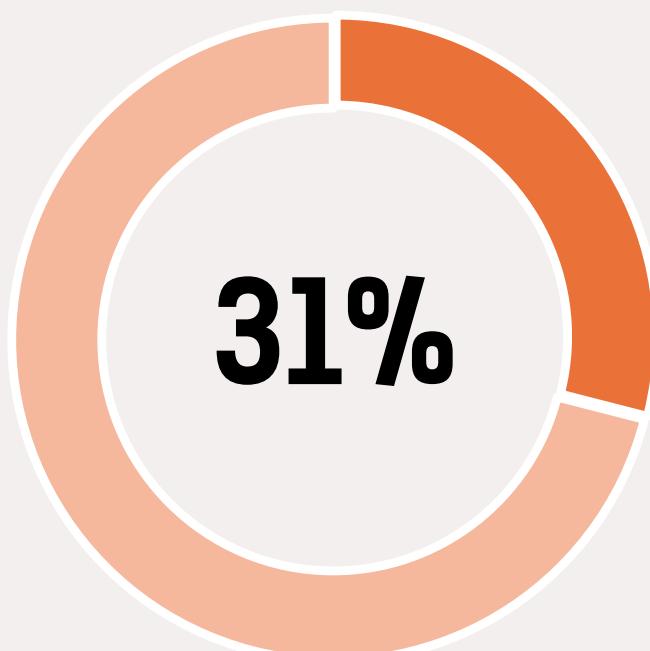
↑ Up 8 points since 2017

## AVERAGE SCORE IN EACH SECTION

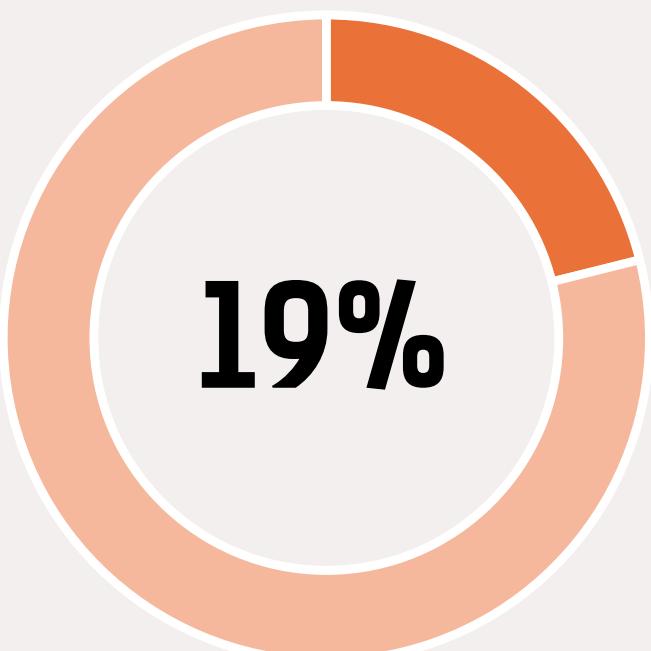
### POLICY & COMMITMENTS



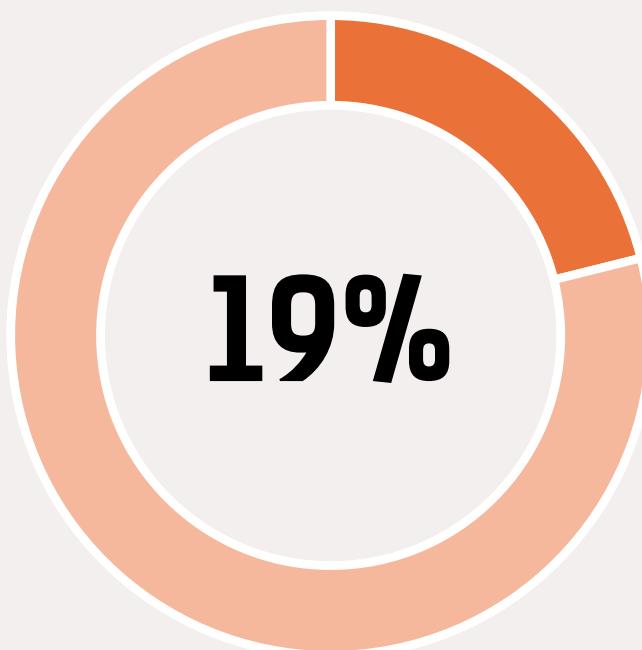
### GOVERNANCE



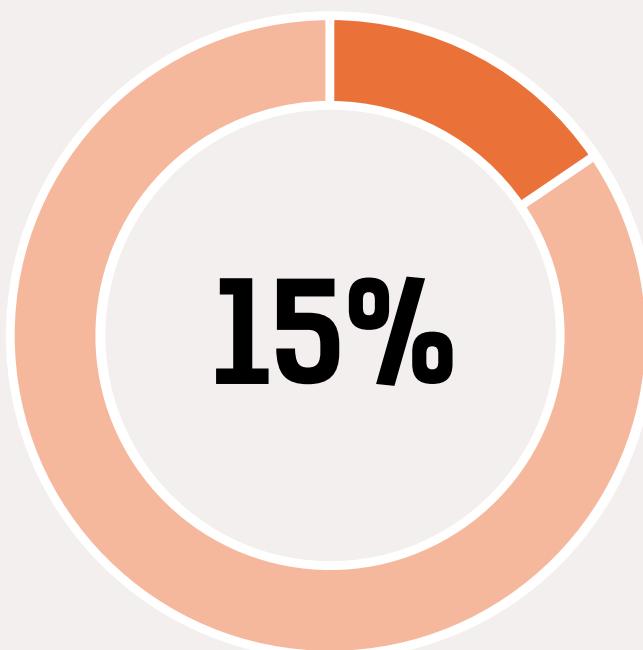
### TRACEABILITY



### KNOW, SHOW & FIX



### SPOTLIGHT ISSUES



**TOP 10 SCORES IN 2021 (%)**

OVS	78
H&M	68
The North Face, Timberland	66
C&A, Vans	65
Gildan	63
Esprit, United Colors of Benetton	60
Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Van Heusen (PVH)	59
Gucci, Kmart Australia, Target Australia	56



## LOWEST SCORING BRANDS IN 2021 (%)

Belle	0	Semir	0
Big Bazaar – ffb	0	Tom Ford	0
Elie Tahari	0	Billabong	0
Jessica Simpson	0	Heilan Home	0
KOOVS	0	Quiksilver	0
Metersbonwe	0	Roxy	0
Mexx	0	celio	0
Youngor	0	Max Mara	0
Fashion Nova	0	New Yorker	0
Pepe Jeans	0	Tory Burch	0



## HIGHEST INCREASE IN SCORES SINCE 2020 (%)

OVS	+44
UGG	+37
Tom Tailor	+24
Target Australia and Kmart Australia	+23
Speedo	+19
Fendi	+18
Dick's Sporting Goods	+15
Bally, Gildan	+14
Zeeman	+13



## HIGHEST DECREASE IN SCORES SINCE 2020 (%)

Wrangler	-24
Adidas, Reebok	-15
Marks & Spencer	-12
Topman, Topshop	-11
Tesco, HEMA	-10
Kmart	-9
Bershka, Massimo Dutti, Pull & Bear, Zara	-8

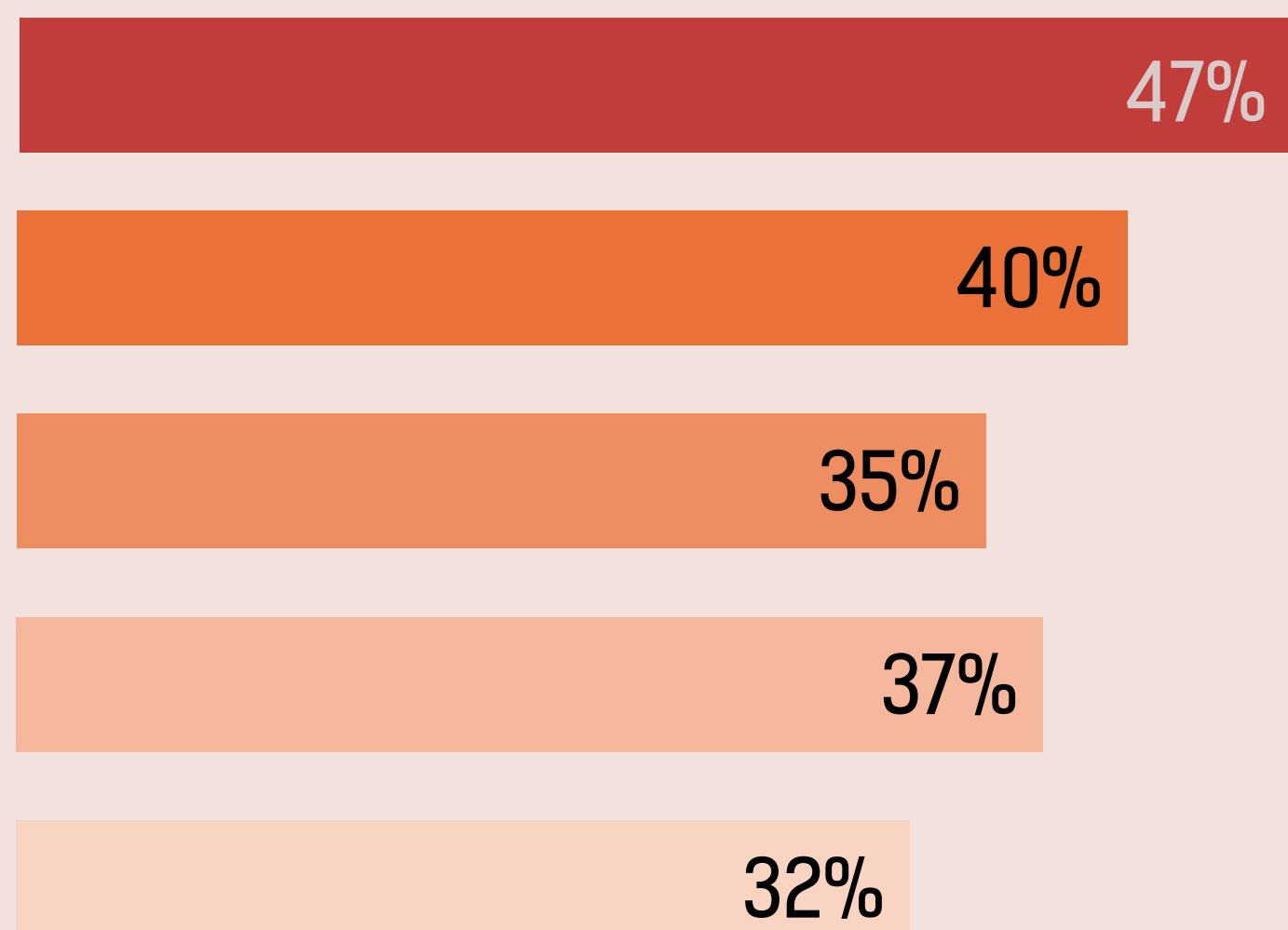


## NON-MOVERS SINCE 2017

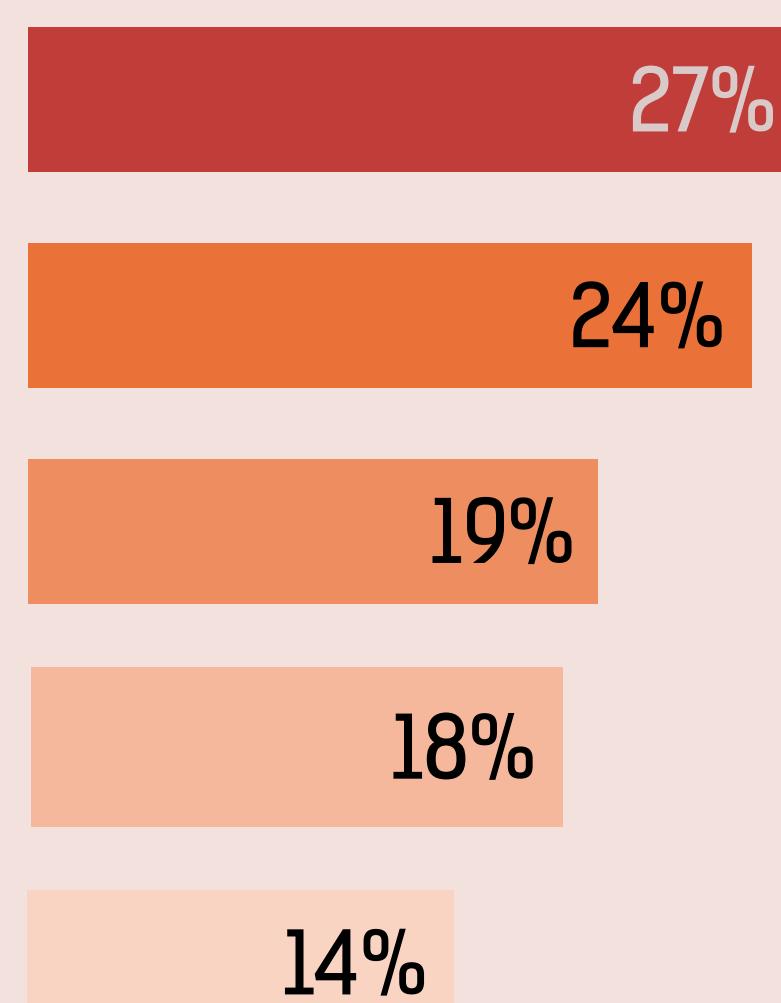
Costco	-1
Bershka, Massimo Dutti, Zara	-1
Pull & Bear	0
Heilan Home	0
Coach	0
Guess	0
Marks & Spencer	0
Claire's	+1
Chico's	+1
Kohl's	+2
Topshop	+2

# PERCENTAGE OF BRANDS PUBLISHING SUPPLIERS LISTS

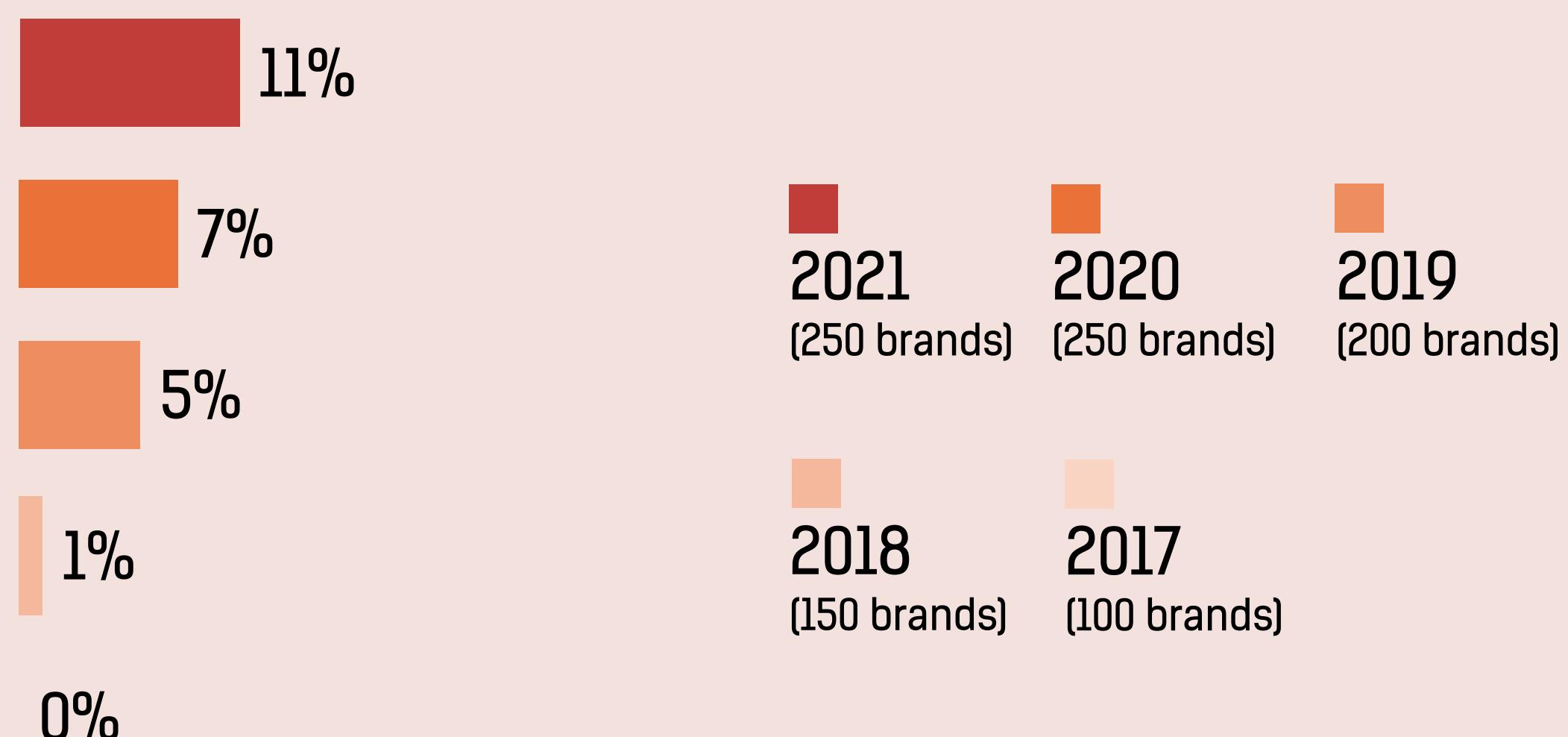
## First-tier manufacturers



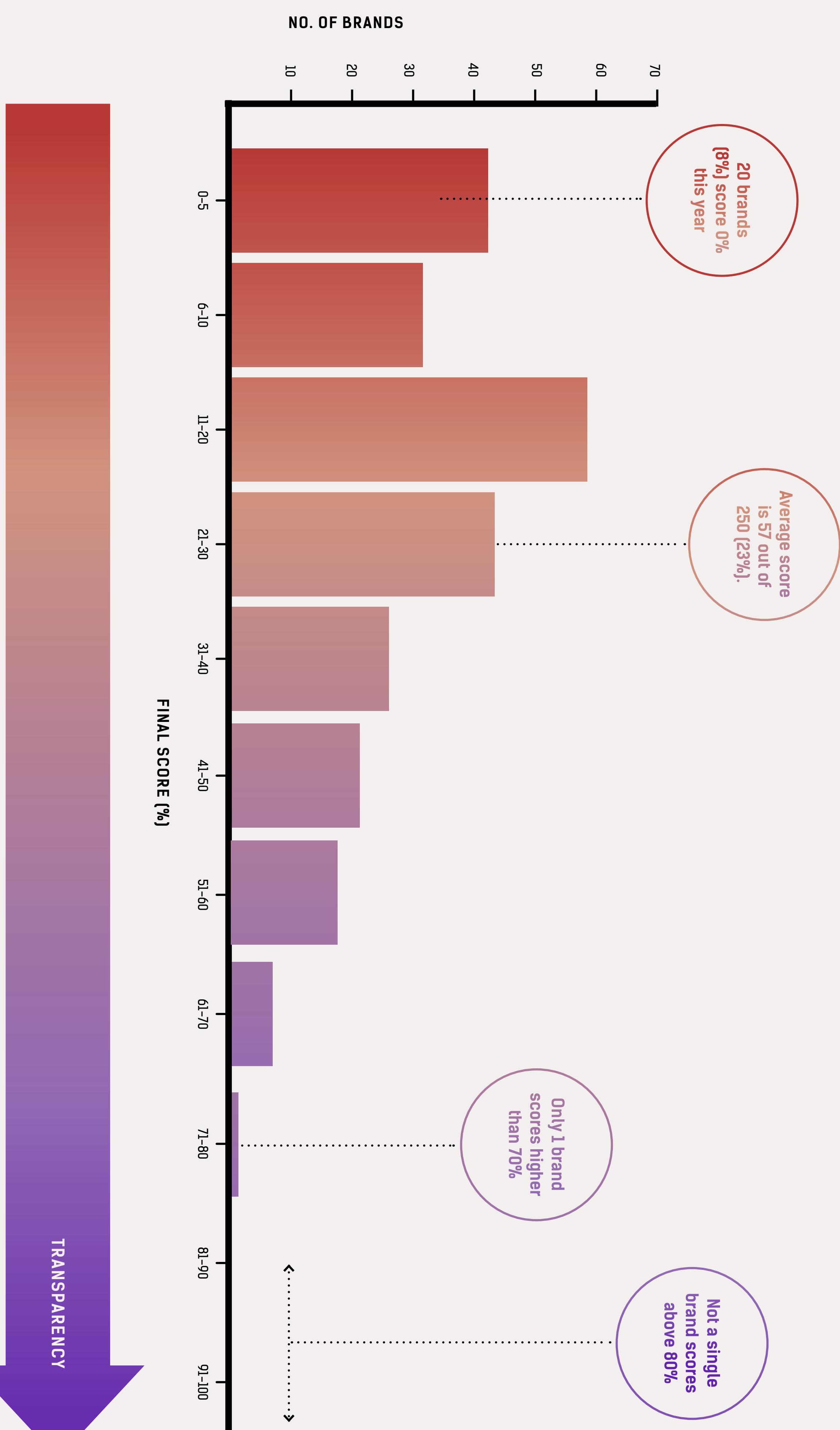
## Processing facilities



## Raw material suppliers



# QUICK OVERALL FINDINGS



# FINAL SCORES

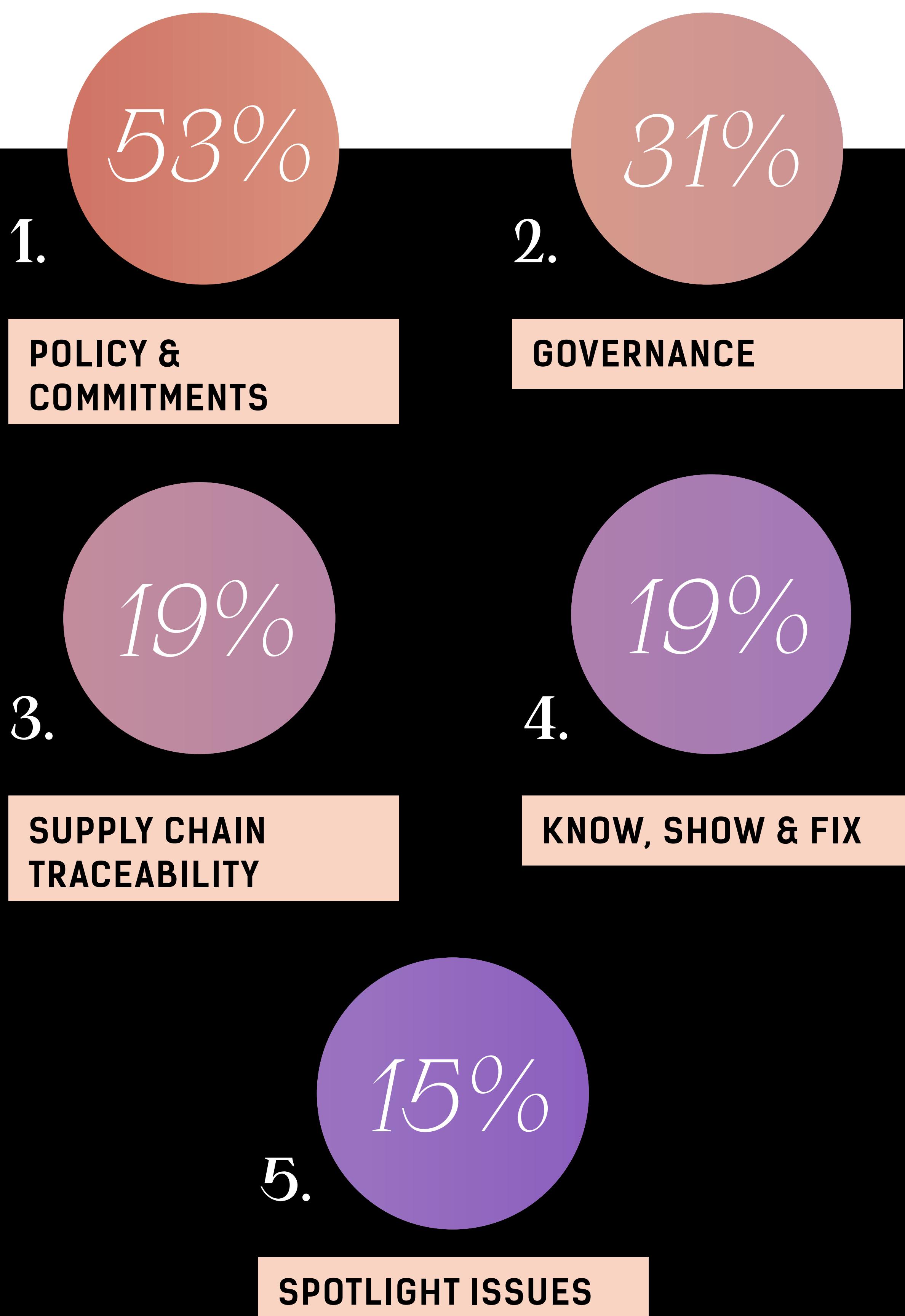
To view the individual final scores for each brand please view the full-length report at [this link](#).

THE FINAL SCORES												FULL RESULTS & DETAILED ANALYSIS 37		
0-5%	6-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-40%	41-50%	51-60%	61-70%	71-80%	81-90%	91-100%				
Brando Cucinelli	5	H&M's	10	boohoo	20	Brooks Sport	30	Next	40	Old Navy	49	H&M	08	CVS
Sports Direct	5	Bloomingdale's	10	Hollister Co.	20	Big W	29	Hanes	39	Gap	49	C&A	08	78
Gerry Weber	5	The Children's Place	9	Abercrombie & Fitch	20	Ralph Lauren	29	Champion	39	Banana Republic	49	Van Heusen	59	Timberland
Bossdeng	5	Splash	9	Otto	20	Pinkie	29	Zeenan	38	ASICS	49	Tommy Hilfiger	59	The North Face
Nanii	5	La Redoute	9	PrettyLittleThing	20	FILA's	28	Aeda	38	Sainsbury's	48	Calvin Klein	59	Vans
Fits	4	DSW	9	REI	19	Nordstrom	28	Primark	38	Marks & Spencer	48	Target Australia	50	Gildan
LC Waikiki	4	Sandro	8	Prada	18	El Corte Ingles	28	Hermes	37	Dressmann	48	Gucci	50	Esprit
K-Way	4	Merrell	9	Miu Miu	18	Morrisons	28	PULL&BEAR	36	ASOS	47	Patagonia	50	
Aeropostale	3	United Arrows	9	Chloé	18	Amazon	27	Zara	36	Zalando	45	Kmart Australia	50	
Juicy Couture	3	LL Bean	9	Monoprix	18	Lid	27	Stradivarius	36	Levi Strauss & Co	44	Nike	55	
Claire's	3	Carhartt	9	Moncler	18	Topshop	27	Moschino Dutti	36	Feedi	43	Jordan	55	
Eddie Bauer	3	Kmart	8	Cotton On	18	Topman	27	Bershka	36	G-Star RAW	43	Converse	55	
Longchamp	3	Chico's	8	Fabulous	17	JD Sports	27	Helly Hansen	36	Russell Athletic	43	UGG	55	
Deichmann	2	Canada Goose	8	Matatabi	17	John Lewis	27	SAINT LAURENT	43	SAINT LAURENT	43	Reebok	54	
REVOLVE	2	Valentino	8	Foschini	17	The Warehouse	27	Burberry	35	Balenciaga	43	Addidas	54	
Jockey	2	Skechers	8	TOPVALU COLLECTION	16	Mango	26	Lacoste	35	Bottega Veneta	42	Tchibo	53	
BCBGMAXAZRIA	2	Reliance Trends	7	Urban Outfitters	16	Walmart	26	Wrangler	34	GU	42	Speedo	53	
DXNY	2	Foot Locker	7	Free people	16	New Look	26	Tom Tailor	42	New Balance	42	Puma	51	
Deice & Gabbana	2	AJIO	7	Anthropologie	16	Topshop	26	Clarke	34	Lululemon	42	Lindex	50	
Nine West	1	Diesel	7	Verace	10	Jack & Jones	25	Russell Athletic	34	Fruit of the Loom	34			
SHEN	1	Furla	7	American Eagle	10	Prima	25	Burberry	34	Target	42			
Tory Burch	0	Buckle	7	Michael Kors	10	Columbia Sportswear	25	Hugo Boss	34	Uniqlo	42			
New Yorker	0	Beaupole	7	Dr. Martens	15	ALDI Nord	25	Tesco	34					
Max Mara	0	ANTA	7	Reserved	15	Kathmandu	25	Ermengildo Zegna	33					
celio	0	Res Dress for Less	0	MP	15	Decathlon	24	Superdry	32					
Roxxy	0	Jill Sander	0	Kohl's	15	Woolworths	24	Mammut	31					
Quiksilver	0	Dillard's	0	Carteriel	15	HEMA	24	Dick's Sporting Goods	31					
Heilen Home	0	Famous Footwear	0	It-Iskado	15	HEMA	24	ALDI SOUTH	31					
Blitzen	0	Express	0	Burlington	15	Carrefour	24							
Tom Ford	0	Triumph	0	Land's End	14	CELINE	22							
Semir	0	Tommy Bahama	0	KIK	14	Very	23							
Pepe Jeans	0	Cole Haan	0	Carolina Herrera	14	Louis Vuitton	22							
Fashion Nova	0		0	ALDO	14	Artsie	22							
Youngor	0		0	Bally	14	Dior	22							
Maxx	0		0	Armani	14	Muji	22							
Metresbonne	0		0	KarlLaud	14	Marc Jacobs	22							
KOOVS	0		0	Ted's	14	River Island	22							
Jessica Simpson	0		0	Steve Madden	14	Victoria's Secret	22							
Elle Tahari	0		0	Joe Fresh	13	Khai	22							
Big Bazaar - #b	0		0	Saks Fifth Avenue (NFC)	13	Kate Spade	22							
Belle	0		0	Hudson's Bay	13	COACH	22							
			0	TJ Maxx	13	Under Armour	22							
			0	Li-Ning	13	Mizuno	22							
			0	CAROLL	13	Ted Baker	21							
			0	Fossil	13	Desigual	21							
			0	Fantastic	12	Disney	21							
			0	Carter's	12									
			0	GUESS	12									
			0	Takko	12									
			0	Codice	12									
			0	Paris	12									
			0	s.Oliver	11									
			0	Chanel	11									
			0	Terenzio	11									
			0	Intimissimi	11									
			0	Catredonia	11									
			0	Truworths	11									

\* Brands ranked in numerical order by score out of 250, but shown as rounded-up percentage. Where brands have the sa

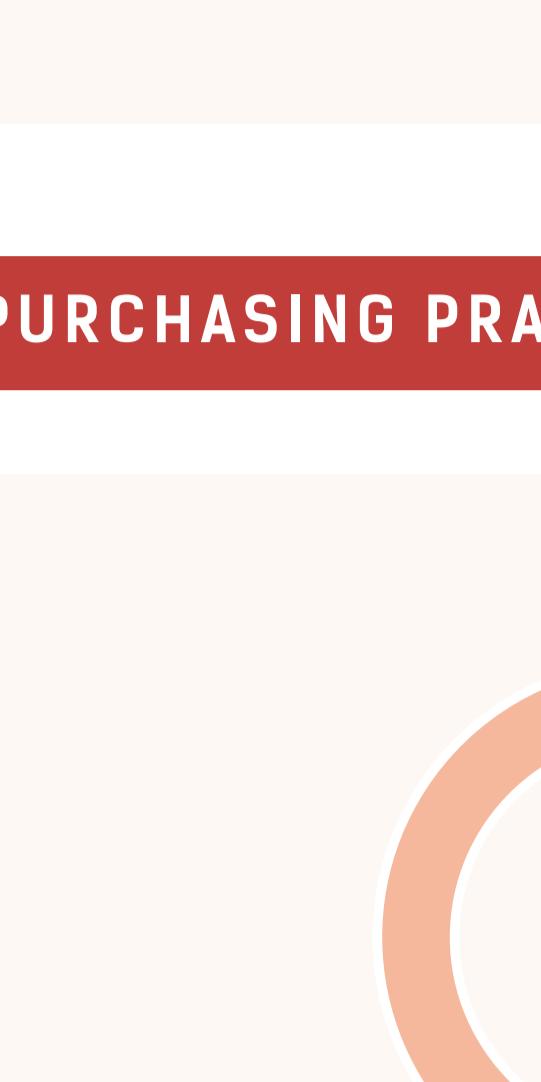


# AVERAGE SCORES ACROSS THE SECTIONS

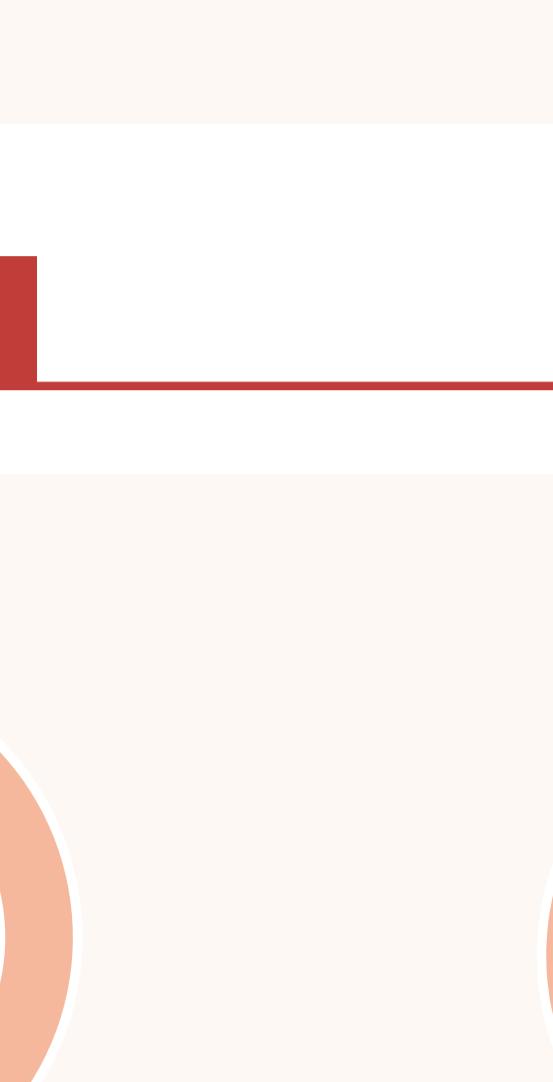


# SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

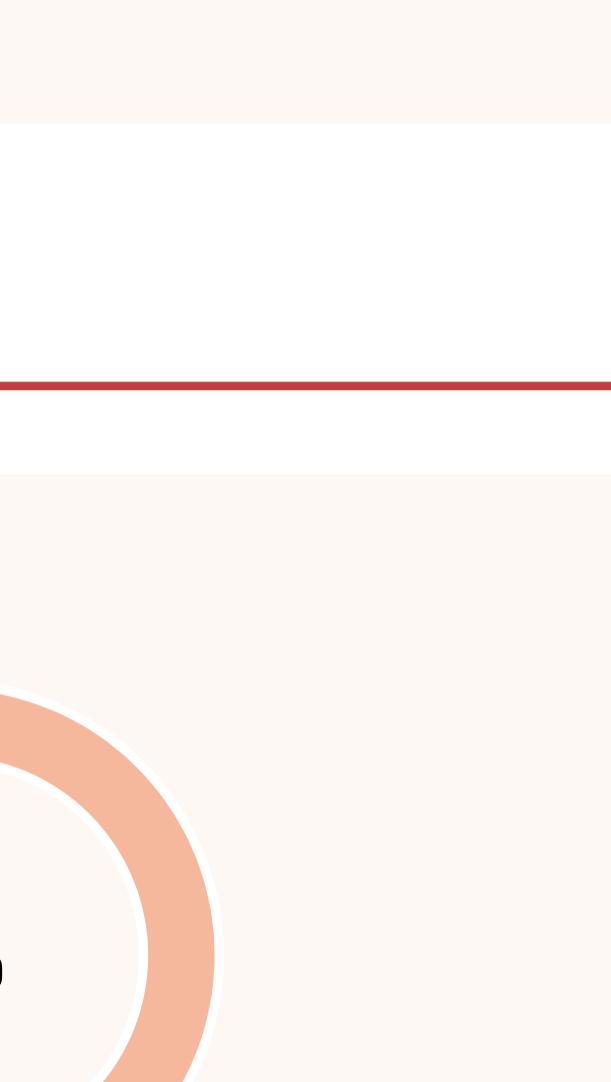
## COVID-19



brands disclose % of orders during Covid-19 where partial or complete order cancellations applied

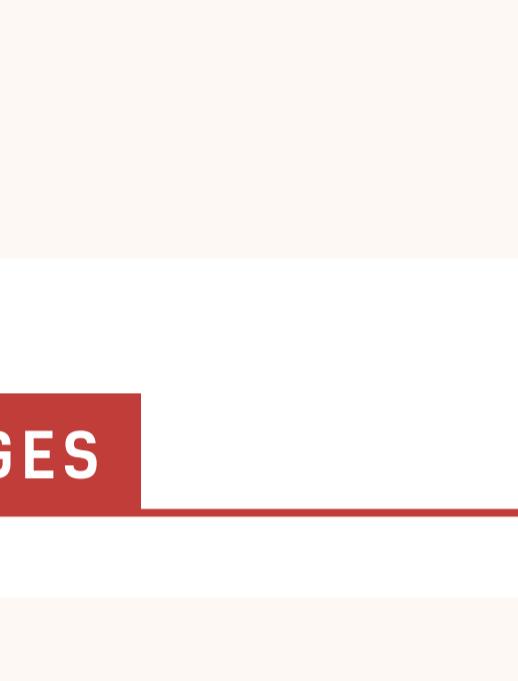


brands disclose the % of workers that received late wage payments due to Covid-19



brands disclose the % or # of workers that have been laid off as a result of Covid-19

## PURCHASING PRACTICES



brands disclose a method for ring-fencing labour costs in price negotiations

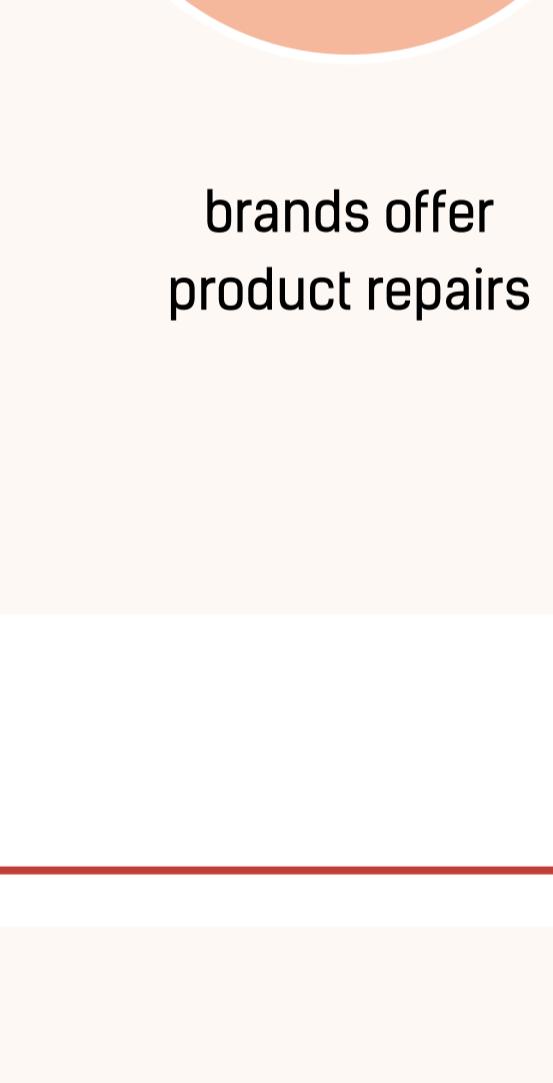


brands disclose the number of orders where labour costs were ring-fenced

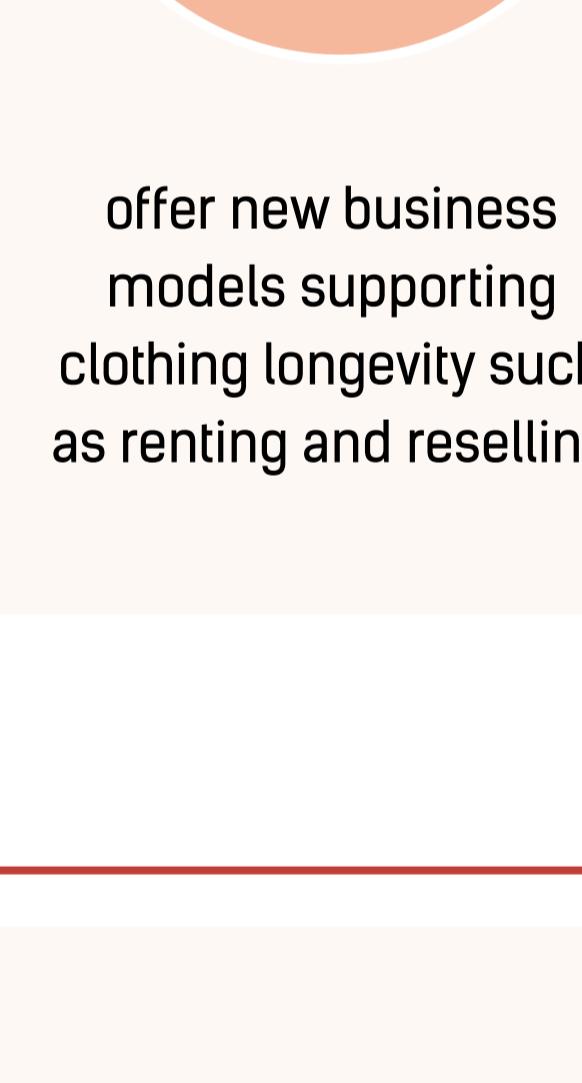
## RACE & GENDER



brands disclose gender pay gap in their own operations

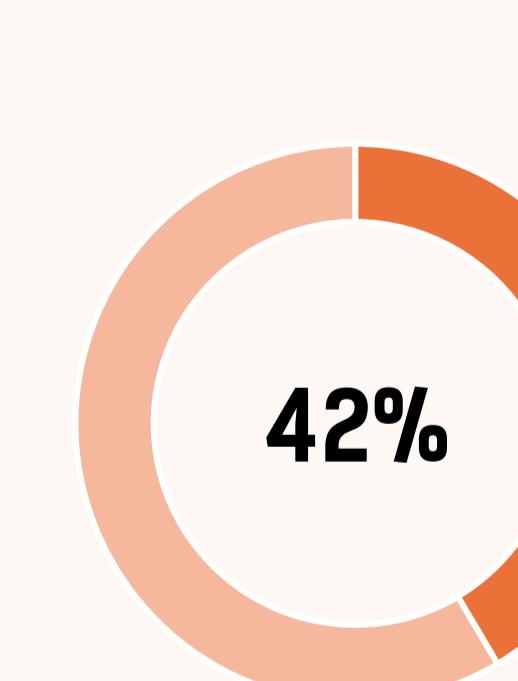


brands disclose ethnicity pay gap data in their own operations

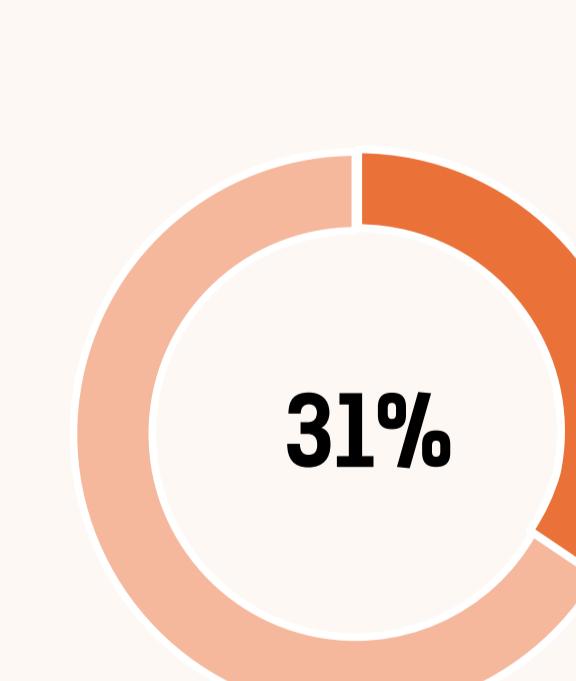


brands publish annual ethnicity pay gap in their supply chain

## LIVING WAGES



brands publish approach to living wages for supply chain workers

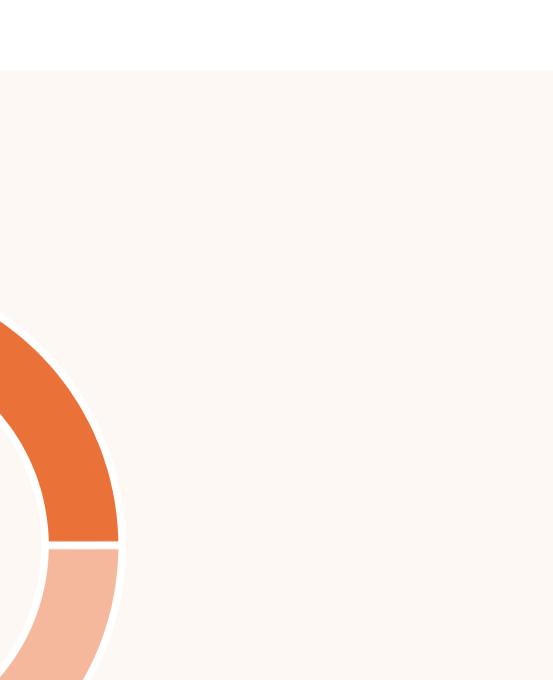


brands disclose % above the legal minimum wage that supply chain workers are paid

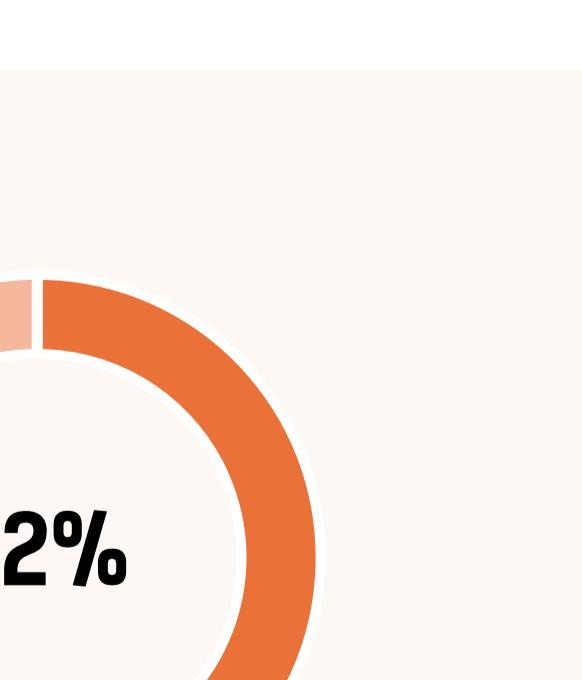
## PRODUCT VOLUME & BUSINESS MODELS



brands disclose data on the quantity of products made annually

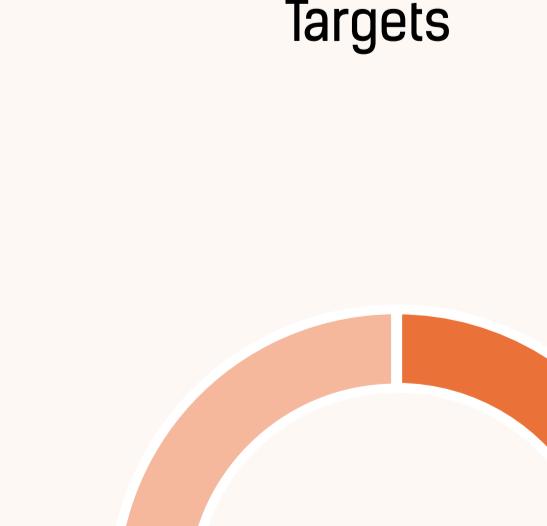


brands offer product repairs

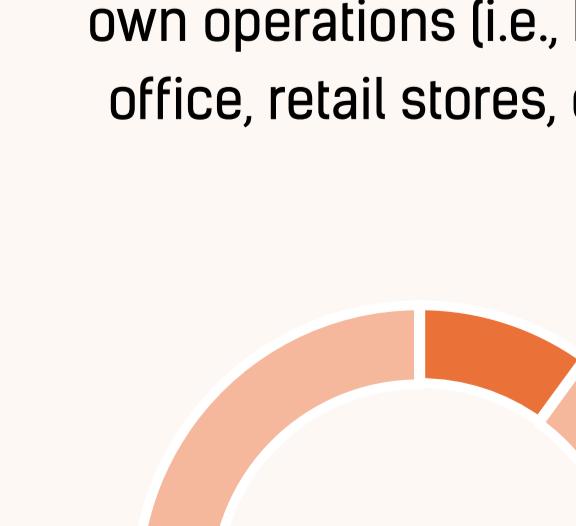


offer new business models supporting clothing longevity such as renting and reselling

## SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS



brands disclose a time-bound, measurable sustainable materials strategy



brands describe how they define what they consider a 'sustainable' material

## CHEMICALS



brands publish a Restricted Substances List



brands disclose progress towards eliminating the use of hazardous chemicals

## CLIMATE IMPACTS



brands publish Science-Based Targets



brands disclose annual carbon footprint in their own operations (i.e., head office, retail stores, etc.)



brands disclose annual carbon footprint at a raw material level



brands publish a time-bound, measurable commitment to zero deforestation

# CASE STUDIES:

## *TRANSPARENCY IN ACTION*

### **Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals (ZDHC) & Open Apparel Registry**

ZDHC is an association of apparel and footwear brands, chemical suppliers and manufacturers working together to reduce the chemical footprint of global textile production by systematically transforming how chemicals are used and establishing tools for sustainable chemical management.

ZDHC has partnered with [Open Apparel Registry](#) (OAR), a neutral and freely available tool that maps and assigns unique identification numbers to garment facilities around the world to help standardise facility names and addresses. Due to the global nature of supply chains and differing languages, various

actors may record a facility's name and address information differently, leading to duplicate, inaccurate and outdated information which makes verifying relationships between brands and their suppliers more complicated. A unique ID helps to change this – kind of like how there could be thousands of people with the name John Smith in the world, but a social security number or national insurance number helps the government differentiate between them.

Linking ZDHC and OAR's databases has enabled communication between two previously siloed platforms, helping to reduce duplication and increasing the accuracy of the links between global brands and their suppliers. This is important because it helps stakeholders like environmental groups and government

agencies to identify a facility, address chemical use and pollution and work together to improve wastewater treatment where it's most needed. To date, ZDHC has contributed 2,638 facilities to OAR's growing volume of 58,000+ facilities.

As more organisations use the OAR platform and its unique facility ID, the accuracy of data related to a specific production site is enhanced because it means information from many sources about a single facility can be gathered and shared. In our research for this Index, we have noticed some brands have begun to share OAR IDs for the facilities on their publicly disclosed supplier lists, signalling just how helpful stakeholders find the unique IDs.

## Advocating Rights in South Asia (Arisa) & the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO)

Arisa is a Dutch organisation which advocates for strengthening the protection of human rights in South Asia in partnership with local groups. Arisa has carried out research into working conditions in Tamil Nadu for many years. Tamil Nadu is a state in the southern part of India where over 60% of all Indian spinning mills are located and where 280,000 workers are employed. The region accounts for 19% of the country's overall textile output and approximately 30% of the production is exported to international brands and retailers, underlining the importance of this textile hub.

There are thousands of adolescent girls and young women working within Tamil Nadu's textile mills and many are at risk of exploitative practices that in some cases

may amount to forced labour. These practices include excessive and involuntary overtime, extremely low wages, physical and sexual violence, restriction of movement and denial of freedom of association.

Between 2019 and 2020, Arisa worked with SOMO, a not-for-profit organisation that investigates the impact of multinational corporations' activities on people and the environment. The purpose of the research was to help enable structural improvements to employment, working and living conditions in Tamil Nadu's textile industry, particularly for the most vulnerable worker groups; primarily child, adolescent, female and migrant workers as well as workers with tribal, ethnic or low-caste backgrounds, including Dalits.

Arisa and SOMO used publicly available production location lists via Open Apparel Registry and the Panjiva database (a subscription-based database which includes detailed

shipment information) to establish links between Tamil Nadu spinning mills and 10 multinational apparel brands.

Research was carried out across 29 spinning mills and 725 workers were interviewed. Indicators of forced labour were identified across all 29 spinning mills, including: abuse of vulnerability, deception, intimidation and threats, abusive working and living conditions, and excessive overtime. Two of the implicated brands came forward and asked the research team to help them get in contact with other brands sourcing from a particular mill, which was possible to prove through publicly disclosed information. This led to three brands working together to address the allegations raised.

# INTERVIEW: WITH THE TAMIL NADU ALLIANCE

THE **TAMIL NADU ALLIANCE** IS A CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM REPRESENTING OVER 100 GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS IN SOUTHERN INDIA FOCUSED ON IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF YOUNG ADOLESCENT WORKERS IN THE TEXTILE SECTOR.

**Q: In our Fashion Transparency Index 2021 report, we found that only 26% of 250 of the world's largest fashion brands and retailers disclose the processing facilities and textile mills in their supply chain. If large international retailers were more transparent about which textile mills they are sourcing from how could this help groups like TNA and the textile workers you support?**

A: The more we know about where international brands and retailers source fabric and yarn from, the more we

can take action to improve workers' rights in the textile supply chain. This includes establishing effective mechanisms to address the grievances of textile workers, promoting ethical recruitment practices, ensuring payment of a fair wage, and encouraging freedom of association.

More transparency would enable civil society networks like the Tamil Nadu Alliance to amplify workers' voices in the supply chain, by engaging with international brands to build a textile industry that supports the well-being of workers.

**Q: Our research shows that only 21% of the world's largest fashion brands and retailers audit their suppliers beyond the first tier of the supply chain, including textile mills. What are some of the most pressing issues facing workers in textile mills in Tamil Nadu that brands may not be aware of?**

**A: Wages are a key issue – there is currently only a legally mandated minimum wage for apprentice textile**

workers (Rs. 477 = \$6.53 USD) and in reality, many experienced workers are paid less than half of this.

Forced overtime, restrictions on freedom of movement, lack of freedom of association and denial of access to statutory social protection benefits is widespread. The impact of the covid-19 pandemic over the past year has exacerbated many of these issues, especially around overtime and delayed payment of wages.

BELOW: LAUNDRY WORKERS



# TAKE ACTION ON TRANSPARENCY *WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT?*

Anyone anywhere should be able to find out how, where, by whom and at what social and environmental costs their clothes are made. This requires greater transparency across fashion's global value chain.

By working together, as one collective voice, we must demand that companies become more transparent and that governments must require transparency from the brands we buy.

We want to see an industry where transparency and accountability are so deeply embedded across the entire value chain that the Fashion Transparency Index is no longer needed. However, greater transparency is only the first step towards making change in

the global fashion industry and, unfortunately, a first step that is still very much needed across much of the industry.

Ultimately, transparency will help us to create a global fashion industry that conserves and restores the environment and values people over growth and profits.

**So, our call to you is this – do not use this Index to inform your shopping choices but rather use these findings to inform your activism. Scrutinise the major brands and hold them to account on their claims.**

# READ THE FULL FASHION TRANSPARENCY INDEX 2021

We strongly encourage you to read the [full report](#) for the full data results, detailed analysis, more case studies and viewpoints from affected stakeholders and industry experts.



Fashion Revolution's Fashion Transparency Index has led the way in increasing transparency across fashion brands' supply chains, while pushing the industry to be more accountable.

With your support we can keep calling on brands to be more transparent as an essential first step towards a better and fairer industry, while advocating for a more dignified quality of life for the people who make our clothes.

Please support us to continue to carry out this crucial work in creating a fashion industry that is more transparent and accountable by becoming a regular supporter or making a one-off donation [here](#).



**DONATE**

