

Higg announces launch of 2nd version Higg FSLM



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Higg Co and Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) in partnership with Social Labor Convergence Program (SLCP), have launched a scored version of Higg Facility Social & Labor Module (Higg FSLM). Now brands can retire independent proprietary tools and be part of industry-wide effort to standardise facility auditing for social and labour issues at global scale.

The Higg FSLM leverages the existing SLCP Converged Assessment Framework as the foundation of the tool. With the new addition of scoring, the Higg FSLM now provides judgement information, eliminating the need for brands to conduct individual audits to assess facilities' performance, and Higg Index scoring enables comparability of the data. The score is out of 100 and covers issues like handling grievances, respectful treatment of workers, and child labour practices.

As a performance assessment, rather than a compliance exercise, the Higg FSLM provides an opportunity for facilities to improve year over year. Standardising the measurement of social and labour practices has long eluded the fashion industry. The Higg FSLM reflects the leading example of the industry coming together to commit to one system of assessment to measure social impacts.

The Higg FSLM is part of the Higg Index, a holistic suite of sustainability tools and services to assess the social and environmental impacts of global value chains and enable performance improvement. From materials selection to manufacturing, logistics, retail, and product use, the Higg Index offers the most comprehensive and credible sustainability assessment framework for the industry. The SAC works with industry stakeholders, including SLCP, to develop the methodology for assessments within the tools, and Higg Co delivers the technology and services to support implementation.

No.316 Oct, 2020

“The launch of Higg FSLM scoring presents an opportunity for brands to retire independent proprietary tools and move towards performance improvement and increased collaboration to address social and labour issues across the value chain. This has been a key goal of the SAC since its inception, and with this launch we get one step closer to reducing audit fatigue and shifting resources towards improvement and collective action. This is a game changer for the industry and a critical tool right now to achieve true industry transformation,” Amina Razvi, executive director of the SAC, said in a press release.

Higg Co, the technology company and service provider behind the digitalisation of the Higg Index, calls the addition of scored data an important step forward for the industry. “Organisations need meaningful end-to-end data to inform management decisions around sustainability investment,” Higg Co CEO Jason Kibbey said. “Availability of accurate data and comparability and consistency of data are critical to enabling the scale up of sustainable business practices.”

Facilities can prioritise making improvements rather than spend time and money on duplicative assessments. “The scored Higg Facility Social & Labor Module frees up time and financial resources that our facilities would typically spend on individual audits,”

Vijay N Suvarna, head of compliance at Asiatan, said. “By using the Higg Index, we can redirect resources to better support employees instead. Through the digital Higg platform, we can more easily connect with our business partners around the world and more effectively collaborate on improving the industry.”

The tool also empowers brands and manufacturers to jointly achieve global value chain improvements. “At Target we recognize that the actions that we take can make a big impact,” Bill Foudy, Target SVP & president Owned Brand Sourcing and Development, said in the release. “We believe that to drive sustainable, systemic improvements in any sector, collaboration is necessary to enable the tipping point to drive lasting change. This includes supporting the development and adoption of industry tools such as the Higg FSLM as part of an ecosystem that is rooted in equal partnership and driving continuous improvement.”

“Industry tools, like SLCP and Higg FSLM, not only provide a standardization of social and labour metrics, but promote improved ways of working across the apparel sector,” Marissa Pagnani McGowan, senior vice president, corporate responsibility at PVH Corp, said.

No.316 Oct, 2020

“The adoption of a collaborative and consistent industry-wide approach frees up valuable time and resources for our suppliers, enabling us to work more productively together to scale positive impacts across the supply chain.”

“The collaboration the Higg FSLM promotes is transformative for the apparel industry,” Simone Colombo, head of corporate sustainability, OVS Spa, said in the release. “The Higg FSLM supports the facilities and communities that manufacture apparel globally and enables brands and retailers to better support them, so we can all work on sustainability together. This scored tool assesses social and labour performance and encourages businesses to better communicate with one another to drive lasting sustainability change.”

The Higg FSLM offers comprehensiveness, data quality, and the ability to reduce audit fatigue. It also offers: comprehensiveness of the tool; set of social and labour data that covers all most important categories; SLCP’s diverse signatory base developed the tool; covers 97 per cent of all data points when compared to 21 traditional audit schemes; data quality; robust verification methodology and verification oversight; automated data quality checks; high-quality, credible data set; reduction in audit fatigue; ability to share data beyond the Higg platform if using the Higg vFSLM;

industry convergence around a single data collection and verification methodology; and enables widespread sharing of a single verified data set (creating efficiency: reducing time and money spent on social audits).

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No.316 Oct, 2020