



Short report

Future lab Sustainable Textiles and Clothing Switzerland

March 22, 2018

1 Meeting minutes of the future lab

About 50 personalities, mainly from the private sector, but also from academia, non-governmental organisations and the government participated in the Future lab Sustainable Textiles and Clothing Switzerland on March 22, 2018 at Zurichberg. The future lab was organised by the FOEN and SECO in collaboration with Swiss Textiles and amfori Network Switzerland and represents the kick-off of a Swiss dialogue on the topic of sustainability across the entire textile value chains.

The objectives of the one-day future lab were the following:

1. Development of a collective understanding of sustainable textiles in Switzerland
2. Identification of challenges and opportunities from the Swiss perspective
3. Draft of a collective “ambition”
4. Concretion of a target vision and possible solution approaches
5. Identification of next steps and concrete projects

1.1 Background

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent the agenda, in form of objectives, targeting a sustainable future and which can be implemented through coordinated collaboration despite the big challenges of our time. Where does Switzerland stand with reference to these objectives? According to recent studies, four out of nine planetary boundaries (climate change, biodiversity, land use and biogeochemical cycles) are already exceeded (up to a factor of 25) and the environmental stress caused by Switzerland abroad increases further (approx. 75%). It is estimated that the demand in the textile sector will rise by an additional 60% (Source: Pulse of the Fashion Industry 2017, Global Fashion Agenda & The Boston Consulting Group). If the efficiency in the use of resources is not pushed further, 60% more raw materials are needed. With the outsourcing of entire value chains, a large part of today's textile production is occurring abroad. The social problems in production and supply chains have been a topic of public debate for years, as well as the reputational risks of brands and retailers. There is a danger that the further expansion and acceleration of production may relativize the hitherto existing improvements of working conditions.

If, for example, the circular economy or the internalization of external costs are treated as possible solutions for sustainable value chains, the fundamental question arises as to what contribution a sustainable Swiss textile industry can make. It also raises the question of how trade and consumption patterns should evolve to optimize resource consumption. How can voluntary initiatives continue to gain in importance and where do social and political conditions have to change? This is where the future lab of March, 22 set off.

1.2 Challenges and opportunities

On the basis of the provided inputs of participants in advance, an up-to-date overview of the most important challenges and opportunities was compiled. It should be emphasized that the majority of participants agree on these challenges and opportunities, but that there are still many unanswered questions and that the challenge of one person can be an opportunity for another, and vice versa. Following, the challenges and opportunities are classified according to the value chain steps:

Step	Challenges	Opportunities
Raw materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability requirements for raw materials - Availability of sustainable raw material - Prices - Ecological footprint of raw materials - Implementation of social standards - Recycling & disposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of old textiles - Promotion of recycling infrastructure - Innovations in recycling - Promotion of sustainable raw materials - Promotion of awareness-raising towards recycling
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complexity and length of value chains - Fast fashion trends - Lack of awareness-raising among stakeholder - Willingness to switch to sustainable production (costs) - Better chemicals management - Micro-plastics - Implementation of social working conditions - Awareness-raising about sustainability in production countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of "Best practice" / actor networking - Improvement of working conditions/compliance - Promotion of individual responsibility/empowerment in countries of production - Promotion of voluntariness - Collective coordination with environmental management
Sustainable consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area of conflict: companies ↔ consumers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Demand for sustainable products – Consumer decisions based on emotions and prices – Consumer pressure for fair and affordable products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of innovative business models - Durable products - Sustainable solutions for large-scale consumer - Creation of added value for Swiss customers - Promotion of awareness-raising and transparency

Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of transparency and multi-staging in value chains - Country-specific legislation & insufficient governmental regulations - Lack of market power - Label and certification jungle - Economic implementation - Loss of sincerity among companies through standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of pioneering role (Centre of competence, vision) / Leadership Switzerland - Promotion of collaboration (International, Switzerland) - Scaling/consolidation of existing initiatives - Promotion of collaboration and capacity building with emerging countries - Promotion of transparency in sustainability strategies - Reduction of trade obstacles / Financial support
Innovation & circular economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negative effects of technological change (job loss) - High investment costs - (Still) immature technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of Industry 4.0 (smart technologies and processes, data management, robotics) - Sustainable, innovative products - Promotion of circular economy - Promotion of innovative business models - Scaling of innovation to production countries - Promotion of transdisciplinarity

At the same time, participants are already actively involved in more than 125 textile initiatives and programs. As can be seen from the mapping based on the value chain cycle (see Figure 1). At the value chain stages of raw materials and textile production these initiatives are mainly focused on single social or environmental matters. At the consumption stage of the cycle they tend to be integrative sustainability initiatives and activities. Initial approaches to internalize external societal and environmental costs (ESG integration, life cycle costs,...) are already available today.

Outcome of discussion:

Discussions in plenary sessions and workshops on the background, the challenges and opportunities showed that the participants agree on the *need for action*, and that *business-as-usual* is not a long-term option for the textile industry. For a large majority of participants, it is a fact that the *Swiss economy* has the know-how and potential *to take a leading role* in the textile and clothing industry of the future through technology, innovation and cooperation. They urge that, despite all the risks and challenges, action must be taken swiftly. Above all, they advocate for entrepreneurial talent and courage to break out of the existing linear system and to think, promote and invest in sustainable (including circular) approaches.

The entire value chain as a system is required and there is also an opportunity for every challenge, which creates certain areas of tension and opens up new fields for solution approaches. There is also consensus on the key challenges and opportunities in the respective value chain stages (raw material production, production, consumption) and on the identified cross-cutting topics, such as governance, transparency and innovation (including circular thinking).

It is important for the participants that consumption is included in the dialogue, since the promotion of suitable consumption patterns can influence new supply and business models. In addition, Switzerland has great entrepreneurial potential for competitive innovation in the field of recycling.

Finally, the participants agree that there are already many good solutions and initiatives to implement and scale.

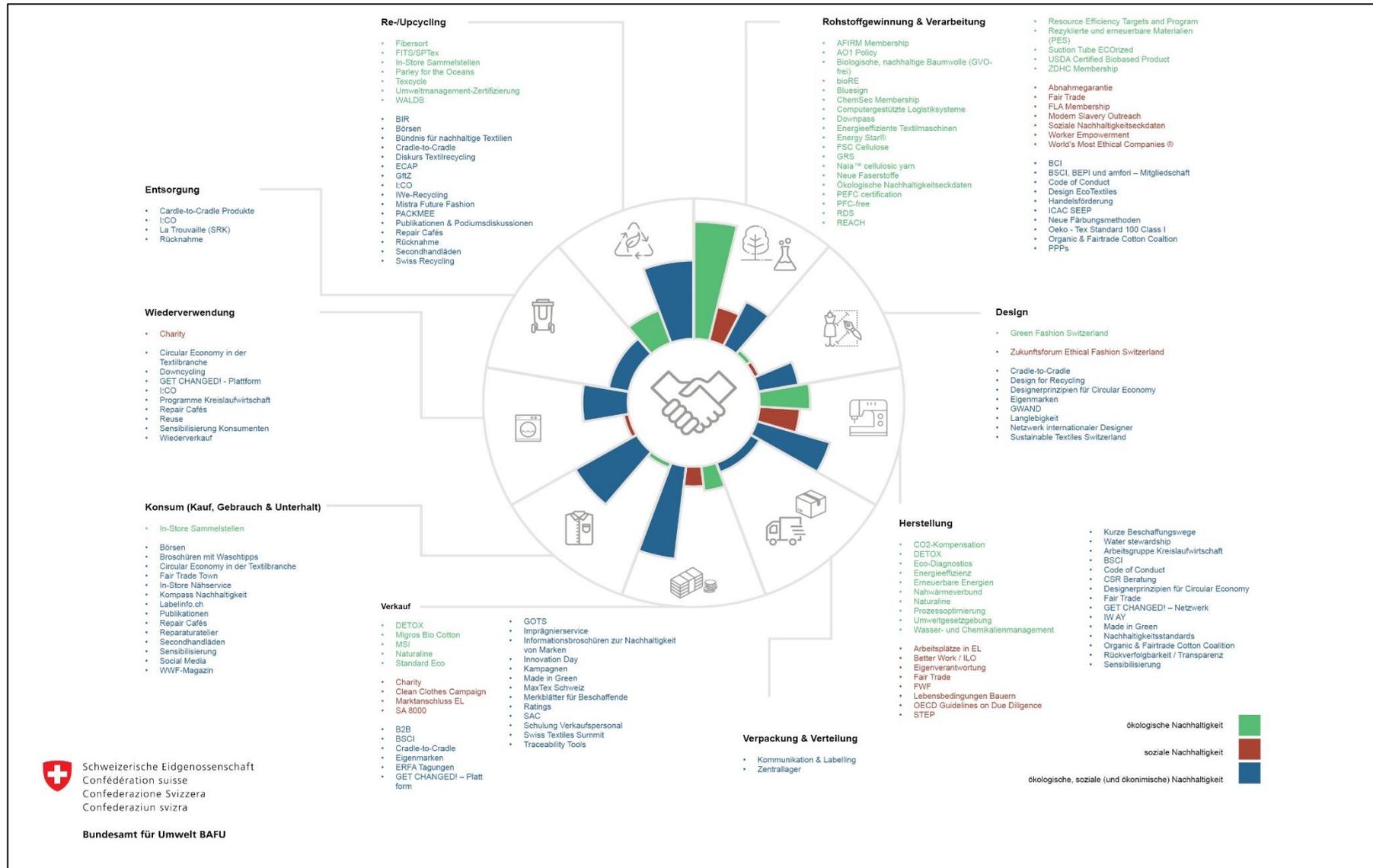


Figure 1: Sustainability activities and initiatives of participants along the textile value chain cycle (Source: FOEN)

1.3 Target visions 2035

In order to address the question of how a sustainable textile industry can be designed, target visions were developed based on the input from the preparatory work and interviews with Nina Bachmann (Swiss Textiles) and Pierre Strub (amfori Network Switzerland), as immediate representatives of the textiles sector, and put up for discussion. The following 6 target visions describe a sustainable Swiss textile industry in 2035:

- **Target vision 1:** Thanks to the cooperation between business, science, society and the public sector and the resulting **technological, social and political innovations**, Switzerland once again assumes a pioneering role in the national and international textiles and clothing industry.
- **Target vision 2: Raw materials** circulate optimally at international level in cycles; primary and secondary raw materials are sustainably managed in Switzerland.
- **Target vision 3:** Transparency within the **manufacturing processes** and stronger links between different stages in the cycle have created socially-responsible, environmentally friendly and profitable production.
- **Target vision 4: Design** is ecodesign and designers proactively demand the design, dismantling and recycling of the textile materials in their creative processes.
- **Target vision 5:** Consumers and large customers are strongly integrated into the value-added chains through the adoption of a systematic perspective and they shape the emergence of new, innovative business models for **sustainable consumption**.
- **Target vision 6:** Business, investors and the state guarantee the continuous integration of the **principle of social responsibility** into the value-added chains and in this way contribute to a more competitive textile and clothing industry.

Outcome of discussion:

Discussions in plenary sessions and workshops on the Target visions 2035 showed that participants agree that *the target visions* point in the right direction. But they also emphasize the urgency of quantifying these target visions. Further additions and clarifications have been collected in this regard. In addition, participants wish to set short-term, concrete and measurable 5-year goals. When developing and implementing solutions, these can serve as shorter-term milestones and guide the further work toward the envisaged target state.

1.4 Approaches

From the group work on the topics of raw materials, production, sustainable consumption and transparency & governance, the following central topics for the development of a sustainable textile and clothing industry Switzerland were identified:

1. Principles & knowledge for decision making
2. Transparency & governance
3. Communication & use of influencer
4. Technology & innovation
5. Public procurement

Outcome of discussion:

By and large, the participants are in agreement with the identified topics for further work and have supplemented them with related topics in the plenary discussion. Furthermore, a list of unanswered questions on these topics was also noted for future reference. According to the motto "no one can do it alone" and the "someone has to organize it", first interested participants have come forward for further work. Further information regarding the subject areas and the interested participants can be found in section 2 in this document (table 1).

For the further maintenance of the networking, the participants agree to make their mail addresses available to those present (completed on 28.3.). In addition, the project leadership team is asked to prepare a short report about the work from the future lab and to draw up the next concrete steps. Furthermore, the participants agree that the project leadership team should inform about the future lab beyond the current circle of participants. When an official report is produced, the attendees would like to view the contents before they commit themselves to their names being mentioned in the communication.

In summary, the participants agree that the "Future lab Sustainable Textiles Switzerland" was a first valuable step in the right direction: the Swiss dialogue on sustainable textiles and clothing has successfully started across the entire textile value chain.

2 Next steps

Specifically, the following activities are planned:

2.1 Initiating the respective working groups

As agreed at the future lab, the project leadership team will coordinate the initiation of working groups (WG). In concrete terms, the team would like to provide support so that initial discussions can take place between the interested actors on the identified subject areas. The goal in the first session of each topic area will be to outline the scope of the work, to set desired goals & milestones and to list additional potential participants and the procedures in the WG.

The leaders of the respective WG will approach the registered and other potentially interested participants directly. The additional applications for participation we received are listed in table 1.

Table 1: Overview of subject areas (content & open questions) and list of registered participants to date (inclusive lead) for working groups

Subject area of WG	Content and open questions	Lead of WG (temporary)
Principles & knowledge for decision making	<p>Measurement methods / data tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is the social performance measured? - How is sustainability measured and quantified? - What is the measurement unit (raw materials, fibres, materials, finished product)? <p>Database</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there any need for circular data (utilization phase, closing the loop)? - Is the data base up-to-date? <p>Life cycle assessment (LCA) of fibres/materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen centre of excellence for LCA at FOEN? <p>Awareness-raising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can the awareness-raising & nudging of stakeholders in value chains be implemented? <p>Recycling</p>	<p>V. Ruppert Schmitt (FOEN)</p> <p>Veronique.Schmitt@bafu.admin.ch</p>
Transparency & standards	<p>Label- and standard jungle</p> <p>Consolidation & scaling up of initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handling of existing initiatives: „less is more“– how do we get there and is it enough? - How does a smart consolidation in the international context look like? <p>Multilateral projects & boards (international support)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who can represent Switzerland internationally and how? - Adjustment to international standards? 	<p>C. Robin (SECO)</p> <p>christian.robins@seco.admin.ch</p>

	<p>Individual responsibility</p> <p>Best-Practice</p> <p>Boards of investors (sustainable finance & ownership)</p>	
Awareness-raising of consumers	<p>Promotion and scaling up of grassroots-campaigns</p> <p>Awareness-raising of consumers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can customers be involved emotionally for sustainable textiles? <p>Education (public)</p> <p>New business models (Sharing, Repair, Loan, ...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can sustainability and approaches be established as mainstream solutions? - How can the area of conflict between consumers and companies be eased outcome-oriented? <p>Simplification of information</p>	<p>V. Ruppert Schmitt (FOEN)</p> <p>Veronique.Schmitt@bafu.admin.ch</p>
Technology & Innovation	<p>Enhancement of efficiency & reduction of the social and ecological impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can existing, international knowledge be introduced? <p>High-end products (quality, sustainability, "Swissness")</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership of Switzerland? <p>Design and processes (storage management, logistics, Pre-sale Waste)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can the design be shaped in such a way, so that textiles are worn for a long time and with good grace? <p>New technologies (machinery, 3D, new materials/chemicals)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can new technologies be used in order to become more sustainable? - Is the export of Swiss technologies an option? 	<p>N. Bachmann (Swiss Textiles)</p> <p>nina.bachmann@swisstextiles.ch</p>

	Best Practice - Can we link innovative actors better?	
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In order to avoid any duplication, new WGs are formed exclusively on subjects for which no existing and active task force is currently known. Since there is an existing taskforce on "public procurement", no new working group is formed here.

→ Other interested persons, who wish to participate in one of the working groups, please contact Mr. Severin Bellè directly via mail (severinluca.belle@bafu.admin.ch)

2.2 Communication of outcomes from the Future lab to existing groups

The FOEN will communicate the outcomes of the future lab directly into the sustainability taskforce of the federal conference of procurement (BKB).

2.3 Preparation public report Future lab Sustainable Textiles and Clothing Switzerland

For the time being, the project leadership team would like to await the progress of the Working Groups before preparing a public report on the Future lab on Sustainable Textiles. In addition to the background, the jointly identified challenges and opportunities and the target visions of 2035 as laid out here, the first results of the respective working groups should be included into an official report. At the appropriate time, the participants will be contacted regarding the mention of their names in the communication.

2.4 Governance Sustainable Textiles and Clothing Switzerland

Finally, and taking into account the development of the various WG, the Confederation, together with the partners of the Future lab, will choose an appropriate governance regime for the continuing work. The project leadership team will invite the participants of the future lab from March 22nd thereafter to implement any possible next steps.

We would like to thank you once again for the exciting and inspiring exchange at the Future lab Sustainable Textiles Switzerland on March 22 and we look forward to the joint implementation of the next steps towards a sustainable textile industry.
