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Levi's to Scale Sustainable Supply Chain Initiatives in Four Key Sourcing Locales

by Tara Donaldson

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Levi's is taking its water-saving efforts to factories in four major sourcing countries.

Building on the success of the International Finance Corporation (IFC)'s Bangladesh Partnership for Cleaner Textile (PaCT), Levi's said Thursday that it will partner with the IFC to develop a global program to ensure environmental sustainability.

The PaCT program has been successful at offering advice to more than 165 textile factories in Bangladesh on how to implement clearer production practices, and Levi's wants to help roll out the offering at six facilities across Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Vietnam to start, with plans to expand the program moving forward.

"We are pleased to be the first IFC partner to pilot its PaCT program in additional countries," Levi's vice president of sustainability Michael Kobori said. "Our goal is to scale the practices globally to achieve greater reductions in water, energy and chemical use across our supply chain."

As greater evidence unfolds about the textile sector's harmful impact on the world and consumers take a keener interest in buying products made by companies aiming to reduce their carbon footprint, more brands—and their suppliers—are taking steps to create more sustainable supply chains.

Implementing cleaner production measures, according to the IFC, can reduce the use of natural resources, lower adverse effects on people and places and promote greater efficiency with better production practices.

"Simple and low-cost measures could reduce water use by up to 20 percent in the factories and lead to savings in future infrastructure and operational expenditure for the factories," the IFC said in a statement.

PaCT will help Levi's with its endeavor by offering Cleaner Production Assessments and PaCT Advantage, a web-based diagnostic process to create a roadmap for suppliers' improvement. Those results can then be benchmarked and used in different factories and for different countries.

"The global textiles sector makes strong contributions to the economies of several countries, creates jobs, especially for women, and has pioneered implementing climate-friendly environmental sustainable practices," Mohan Seneviratne, IFC's program manager for PaCT, said. "We are delighted that IFC's PaCT program focused on implementing water-and energy-efficiency best practices, is partnering with Levi Strauss & Co. to develop this global environmental sustainability program."

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