

# THE DETOX CATWALK 2016 – CAMPAIGN AND CRITERIA EXPLAINED

## Detox My Fashion – state of play

For decades, companies have chosen to use the environment and in particular our waterways as a dumping ground for industrial hazardous chemicals, unhindered in many places by effective government regulation. This has led to the continuous and on-going build-up of persistent hazardous chemicals throughout the environment.<sup>1</sup> For the local communities living near manufacturing facilities and for consumers around the world implicated in this toxic cycle, water pollution has become a daily reality.

Attempts to address this problem have typically involved setting and tightening the legal limits for the discharge and release of a relatively narrow range of hazardous chemicals. Corporations have also implemented these limits in their corporate responsibility programmes, seeking to comply with local laws rather than apply the strictest standards. However, this ‘legalised pollution’ is a compromise that benefits irresponsible corporations and hasn’t prevented the continuing release of toxic chemicals into the environment.<sup>2</sup> The scale of industrial production and the typical ‘business as usual’ approach to manufacturing - particularly in the Global South - means that the use and release of hazardous chemicals by the industry is still occurring.

Greenpeace launched its “Detox My Fashion” campaign in July 2011 to address this, asking the textile industry to urgently take responsibility for its contribution to the problem, past and present. Hazardous chemicals – including the 11 priority groups identified by Greenpeace<sup>3</sup> - are commonly used for the manufacture of clothes by many well-known brands. These chemicals were found in effluent from their supply chain manufacturers, in their products and in the environment, despite decades of regulation and corporate responsibility programmes. Legal limits on the use and discharge of these hazardous chemicals, where existing, allowed releases from a multitude of sources to build up in the environment and accumulate over the years. For persistent, hazardous chemicals, there is no ‘safe’ level.

After five years of the “Detox My Fashion” campaign, we have secured global commitments to Detox from 76 international brands, retailers and suppliers. The campaign has also had political impacts, triggering policy changes such as China's enforcement of stricter wastewater standards or the EU ban on the import of textiles containing the hazardous chemicals nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPEs) that should enter into force in 2020. Fashion brands have an important role to play in transforming the practices of their suppliers and several were the first companies to make Detox Commitments.

## The Detox Catwalk

This is the third edition of the Detox Catwalk, which assesses fashion brands that have agreed a Detox Commitment with Greenpeace. In this edition there is a greater focus on implementation; brands are evaluated from the point of view of their Detox 2020 hazardous chemical elimination deadline, thinking backwards to assess if they have the necessary tools to be **fit for 2020**.

<sup>1</sup> Greenpeace International (2009), Poisoning the Pearl: An investigation into industrial water pollution in the Pearl River Delta <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/publications/reports/poisoning-the-pearl/> p39

<sup>2</sup> Greenpeace International (2011). Hidden Consequences: The costs of industrial water pollution on people, planet and profit. May 2011 <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/publications/reports/Hidden-Consequences/>

<sup>3</sup> The 11 priority hazardous chemical groups are : 1. Alkylphenols (APEOs) 2. Phthalates 3. Brominated and chlorinated flame retardants (BFRs, CFRs) 4. Azo dyes 5. Organotin compounds 6. Per- and polyfluorinated chemicals (PFCs) 7. Chlorobenzenes 8. Chlorinated solvents 9. Chlorophenols 10. Short chain chlorinated paraffins 11. Heavy metals such as cadmium, lead, mercury and chromium (VI).



Depending on the credible steps these companies have taken towards their Detox commitment, the Detox Catwalk groups them into three categories: the first two are *avant-garde* and *evolution mode*. Companies that are not delivering sufficient results are in a third category: *faux pas*.

This new edition of the Catwalk assesses 19 Detox committed companies from the Fashion and Sportswear sectors. It finds that a few companies are ahead of the curve and on track to meet their commitments – these three are *avant-garde*. The majority – twelve - of the Detox committed brands are still in *evolution mode* - and need to improve their performance in at least two of the three key assessment criteria. Finally, four brands are taking a *faux pas* - by not yet accepting individual responsibility for their hazardous chemical pollution and implementing the urgent steps needed to achieve the goal of eliminating hazardous chemicals by 2020. These categories are defined as follows and are the result of an assessment of three overall criteria, described in detail in this document (Detox 2020 plan; PFC elimination and transparency):

- **Avant-Garde:** a good performance on at least two criteria and no critical failure on any
- **Faux Pas:** critical failures on at least two criteria
- **Evolution Mode:** any combination of assessment between Avant-Garde and Faux Pas as described above

In addition there are many companies that have yet to commit to Detox, some of whose products have been found to contain hazardous chemicals when analysed in investigations that Greenpeace has undertaken since October 2013 and have not responded with a credible detox commitment to solve this issue.

This edition assesses the deeper implementation of the companies Detox Commitments – to address the question, are the Detox brands 2020 fit?

By successfully achieving their Detox Commitments companies are taking important steps to clean up the textile supply chain and prevent the release of hazardous chemicals throughout the environment. However, the increasing environmental and health impacts from the manufacture of textiles are not only due to chemical use; impacts across the whole textiles life cycle are amplified by the huge increase in the quantities of clothes that are sold and the rate that they are thrown away. Therefore, this edition introduces the issue of "**closing and slowing the loop**" – in future the Detox campaign will take a closer look at this issue and whether brands' daily practices are moving towards closing and slowing their loop in order to tackle excessive use of resources.

### Criteria

There are three criteria on the issue of hazardous chemicals:

1. Detox 2020 Plan
2. PFC Elimination
3. Transparency

Greenpeace will assess if companies are on track to meet the goals set in their Commitments to Detox by 2020. The evaluation will compare the company's performance with the best practice in each criteria category.

**Detox 2020 Plan** focusses on a company's chemicals management system, specifically its **Manufacturing Restricted Substances List (MRSL)** and the methodology needed to establish this list, which is needed to identify hazardous chemicals used in manufacturing by suppliers and set priorities for elimination with timelines.

**PFCs Elimination** currently serves as a poster-child for the implementation of the 2020 goal. It assesses the progress made towards the commitment to eliminate any use and discharge of one of



the widely used hazardous chemical groups per/poly fluorinated chemicals (PFCs),<sup>4</sup> and the publication of case studies showing how this has been achieved.

**Transparency** evaluates whether the company has ensured that its suppliers regularly publish data on the discharge of hazardous chemicals from their wet processes on the Detox section of the IPE online platform<sup>5</sup> and whether it discloses its suppliers list (including second tier where the wet processes are likely to take place).

Progress is to be reported by companies on their corporate website on a dedicated Detox webpage, visible and prominent, and clearly divided by criteria

### Detox 2020 plan

The core element of a Detox 2020 Plan is a **Manufacturing Restricted Substances List (MRSL)** and the procedures connected to it.

An MRSL, together with a Product Restricted Substances List (PRSL), are the main **leverage tools for chemicals management** across the whole supply chain, from the first level of the supply chain (tier 1) through to chemical suppliers.

While the Product-RSL aims to protect consumers, the MRSL sets a **black list** of chemicals selected for their occupational and environmental hazards at the production stage. This list is vital to enable brands to progress towards their 2020 goal of eliminating all hazardous chemicals (not only the initial 11 priority groups). For each individual chemical, a no-detection limit for wastewater **before** treatment has to be set: this creates a safety net to check on compliance with the MRSL and to monitor progress in phasing out uses of hazardous substances.

### Principles

Each brand should have **its own**<sup>6</sup> transparent list,

- Implementing proactive **preventive and precautionary** action: this recognises that a brand has limited influence on the actual chemical risk management of its supplier and the resulting occupational and environmental exposure (in particular in high-risk jurisdictions). The company has a better leverage on hazards elimination by commercially binding the suppliers to immediate bans and phase-out plans of hazardous chemicals listed on the MRSL.
- **Clean factory** approach: it's not only about improving a brand's own production lines but the whole factory chemicals management, with the risk otherwise that different standards of chemicals management coexist in the supplier's facility resulting in potential sources of contamination, loss of leverage on actual chemical safety, impossibility of monitoring progress, and on-going reputational risks

---

<sup>4</sup> PFCs refer here to per- and polyfluorinated chemicals (also known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, PFASs. It includes precursor chemicals such as fluorotelomers that can degrade to form perfluorinated chemicals (e.g. PFOA), and covers both non-polymeric & polymeric chemicals. See

<https://www.oecd.org/chemicalsafety/risk-management/Working%20Towards%20a%20Global%20Emission%20Inventory%20of%20PFASS.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The IPE online platform (based in China) is an existing well known and independent relational, and publicly accessible, database including a section that provides voluntarily disclosed data on company emissions, consumptions and pollutant discharges and also discharges and emissions of hazardous chemicals searchable by facility name, activity, date, location and/or individual pollutant. The Internet platform has direct data entry with the necessary procedures for security and data verification.

The IPE disclosure platform is used to ensure the discharges data of various supplier facilities are easily accessible, centralized and searchable via consistent credible content and form. These data may additionally be shared via the brand and supplier's website. But, these additional forms of data distribution will not be a substitute/replacement for China supplier disclosure via the IPE platform. IPE is an independent non-profit, non-governmental organisation that, on occasion, may also work on similar issues as Greenpeace.

See: [http://www.ipe.org.cn/En/pollution/discharge\\_detox.aspx](http://www.ipe.org.cn/En/pollution/discharge_detox.aspx)

<sup>6</sup> Brands have to take individual action to ensure that the MRSL set up is at a credible level, in line with their detox commitment



- Detox “Zero” means “**not detectable by current best available technology**”: ie. investigating the lowest technically available **detection limits (DLs)**, requiring labs to use them and regularly updating them

The List should be derived using a **credible and transparent hazard screening methodology**<sup>7</sup> based on nine principles listed in Annex 1 of the Detox Commitment.<sup>8</sup>

### *2020 fit MRSL assessment criteria*

To be 2020 fit, companies need to have:

- An attached **transparent hazard screening methodology** with a timeframe for revision
- The core task of the MRSL, which is the list of **individual substances** sorted by group with CAS number, **status** of elimination (ban/phase-out) and in the latter case, **associated timelines**
  - Associated **DLs for formulations AND raw wastewater**
  - Associated **testing method**
- Guidance to suppliers on how to use the MRSL with **clear language on clean factory approach**, translated where necessary
- Clear mention of **lowest technically available detection limits**
- Any other information such as the terms of implementation, monitoring, quality control (eg. templates for testing) and additional useful references: the company’s Detox roadmap, policies, etc.

Companies have been asked to provide this information by a specified deadline, showing that: either all these steps have been taken; or that they have a clearly stated plan for taking these steps with a timeline, as a revision commitment in the company’s progress report.

### **PFCs elimination**

The hazardous chemical group per/poly fluorinated chemicals (PFCs)<sup>9</sup> is one of the 11 priority groups identified in the companies Detox Commitment. PFCs are a group of chemicals that are known for their water and oil repellent properties and have been identified as persistent, bioaccumulative and/or toxic.<sup>10</sup> Responsible Detox brands have committed to phase out (and some have already eliminated from their global supply-chains) any use and discharge of PFCs.

The commitment is for the elimination of PFCs as a **group**, following a precautionary approach, rather than chemical by chemical, as chemicals with a similar structure and properties can be expected to have similar properties and hazards. PFCs are particularly relevant for the implementation of the precautionary approach in the EU’s REACH regulation, where they are potentially being looked at as a group.

---

<sup>7</sup> An example of best practice is to endorse all hazardous chemicals derived from a GreenScreen full assessment, at least all Benchmark 1/Benchmark 2 - or derived from the GreenScreen List translator, all LT-1 . See GreenScreen® For Safer Chemicals, and <http://greenscreenchemicals.org/> and <http://www.greenscreenchemicals.org/resources/entry/list-translator>

<sup>8</sup> Principles for hazard screening methodology:

1. Hazard based: no 'risk based' criteria for excluding certain chemicals
2. Includes a broad range of hazardous categories (at least those under REACH regulation)
3. Using at least all publically available information
4. Cautious thresholds in hazardous criteria setting
5. Assessment of the effectiveness of the screening tool for hazard identification
6. Full transparency on criteria, methods, data, thresholds, information sources
7. Taking by-products and environmental fate into account
8. Recognise the importance of physical form e.g. nanomaterials, polymers, etc.
9. If no or missing information the 'hazardous until proven non-hazardous' assumption should apply + group approach

<sup>9</sup> PFCs see footnote 4.

<sup>10</sup> [www.greensciencepolicy.org/madrid-statement/](http://www.greensciencepolicy.org/madrid-statement/)



A credible elimination programme therefore needs to include the whole group of PFCs as well as the entire product range of the company concerned, within a reasonable timeline ranging from December 2015 to July 2017.

The process of eliminating PFCs involves the identification of suitable, non-hazardous **substitutes** for some or all of the functions and attributes of PFCs. The alternatives to PFCs should be assessed with same precaution – ie. they should be **assessed for hazards** and the information made public to ensure only non-hazardous/safer alternatives are used.

The elimination of any hazardous chemical must be supported by regular, credible, public documentation via a corporate website, and include **case studies** on the substitution of hazardous chemicals with safer alternatives, published, for example, via the online Subsport.org platform or equivalent.

Case studies are crucial, firstly to provide **transparency**, including evidence that a hazard based approach to substitution has been taken and secondly, to drive regulation and **level the playing field** on the elimination of PFCs as a group.

### *2020 fit PFC elimination criteria*

To be fit for the 2020 goal, companies need to have:

- Achieved the elimination of PFCs according to their Detox Commitment, with details reported in their progress report
- Published at least one Case Study showing the substitution of PFCs; this should include hazard screening data and information on uses (on subsport.org and/or on own website)

To achieve ‘best practice’ companies should provide details in their progress report on the following:

- The product categories which are included;
- When they are due on the shelf;
- The performance assessments that have been carried out;
- Any sacrifices on functionality that have been made in the process of substituting PFCs.

If the company has not yet achieved 100% elimination, the progress report needs to include:

- The progress made so far, reported as a percentage of global sales;
- A description and a link to consumer-facing information (in stores or online sales websites) which allows customers to easily choose PFC-free products.

### **Transparency**

This criteria implements the **Right-to-Know**, giving the people the information on risks and impacts and empowering them with a capacity to influence. We, as global citizens, have a fundamental ‘Right to Know’ which hazardous chemicals are being used and discharged into the environment and where precisely this is happening (at which local facility and in which products).

The Detox commitment includes transparency on the use and discharge of all hazardous chemicals,<sup>11</sup> to ensure that those responsible respond to public pressure and act rapidly and effectively to achieve zero use and discharge of hazardous chemicals.

---

<sup>11</sup> Greenpeace International (2011a). Dirty Laundry: Unravelling the corporate connections to toxic water pollution in China. July 2011 <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/publications/reports/Dirty-Laundry/>  
<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/publications/Campaign-reports/Toxics-reports/Dirty-Laundry-Reloaded/>  
Greenpeace International (2012c). Toxic Threads: Putting Pollution on Parade. December 2012. <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/publications/Campaign-reports/Toxics-reports/Putting-Pollution-on-Parade/>  
Greenpeace International (2012d). Toxic Threads: Under Wraps. December 2012. <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/publications/Campaign-reports/Toxics-reports/Toxic-Threads-Under-Wraps/>  
Greenpeace International (2013). Toxic Threads: Polluting Paradise, A story of big brands and water pollution in Indonesia, April 2013, <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/publications/Campaign-reports/Toxics-reports/Polluting-Paradise/>



Responsible Detox companies should ensure the publication of precise, relevant, up to date and locally accurate information on the use and discharge of hazardous chemicals from individual facilities in their supply chains, in a form that can be easily accessed by local communities, the general public and public interest organisations, for example via the IPE (Chinese Institute for Public and Environmental Affairs<sup>12</sup>) global online platform<sup>13</sup> as well as the company's own website.

The publication of discharge data also seeks to further engage brands with their suppliers and support moves towards a clean factory approach.

Publishing data allows all stakeholders to follow, trust and challenge a company's progress and feed self-motivation. It can also significantly influence local legislation to adopt Detox water standards and chemical policy. Ultimately, it could inspire the establishment of a global standard for transparency and accountability across the whole textile sector and beyond.

### *2020 fit transparency criteria*

To be fit for the 2020 goal, companies need to:

- Publish discharge data from **at least 80% of wet process suppliers** uploaded on IPE regularly (at least annually) and continuously updated, for at least the initial 11 priority hazardous chemical groups
- Disclose their **list of suppliers**, including **at least tier 1&2** wet process suppliers

Companies have been asked to prioritise the publication of data from suppliers in China, where much of the world's textile production takes place, over the disclosure of data from other countries. Companies are asked to publish information ((in a Progress Report) on the disclosure of data from suppliers that is due to be uploaded in the near future (up to August 31<sup>st</sup> 2016).

To make good use of this data, companies need to publish an analysis of trends in the discharge of hazardous chemicals and details of investigations, broken down by country / types of facility / individual facilities.

In addition, companies can provide an activity report on chemical management capacity building and improvement assessment at supplier level.

---

<sup>12</sup> See footnote 5, IPE

<sup>13</sup> By publishing chemical discharge data via the IPE disclosure platform, a company's suppliers ensure that the data is credible, that it includes the necessary details to identify the individual facility concerned and that it covers at least the 11 groups of priority hazardous chemicals. Because much of the world's textiles production takes place in China, companies must ensure data from suppliers in China (including Taiwan) is disclosed, followed by other major suppliers in the Global South.