



Sustainable Water Use in Textile Production – A Case for Cooperation

9:00 – 10:30 AM, 16 June

OVERVIEW

The aggravated problem with global water scarcity has created a new sense of urgency amongst many businesses with production in water scarce areas. Over the last years, private sector actors have begun to consider water scarcity as an increasing risk for investments and corporate activities. A growing number of companies acknowledge that it is important to be proactive in developing more sustainable water use patterns in order to avoid future economic losses due to decreased and more polluted water resources and tougher legislation.

The Sweden Textile Water Initiative (STWI) sets an interesting example of cooperation between competing businesses in the environmental field. The objective for the cooperation is to develop guidelines for sustainable water use, applying an “upstream perspective” – i.e. assuming a responsibility for not only chemicals remaining in the textile or leather products or cutting costs in reducing water and energy use, but also for the surrounding environment, including ecosystem services and human health.

In the initial phase, running over two years from 2010 to 2012, 32 Swedish companies, importers of textile and leather goods, have been involved in a learning process about sustainable water use in textile and leather production. Through participation in working groups and regular meetings these companies have cooperated to produce joint guidelines. In the next phase these companies aim to integrate these guidelines in their CSR-work and in the contracts with their suppliers.

The objective of the seminar is to present the outcome of the Sweden Textile Water Initiative and to highlight the main lessons learned from the initial phase. Other companies, as well as decision makers, scientists and environmental NGO’s will be invited to discuss the challenges and possibilities for corporations to take a proactive role in contributing to water efficient solutions.

PROGRAMME

Speakers:

- Torgny Holmgren, Ambassador and Head of the Department for Development policy, Sweden Ministry for Foreign Affairs
- Karin Lexén, Director of the Swedish Water House, Stockholm International Water Institute and board member of STWI

- Stuart Orr, Manager Freshwater Team, WWF International
- Dov Brachfeld, Global Environmental Sustainability Controller, H&M Hennes & Mauritz

AGENDA

- Welcome and introductory note by the Swedish Government on the importance of cooperation between different actors in enabling sustainable use of water - the role of public policy and development cooperation (10 min)
- Presentation of the Sweden Textile Water Initiative; key lessons learnt, next steps (15 min)
- Questions by the audience (10 min)
- Responses by representatives from H&M, the Swedish Government and WWF International (all together 30 min)
- Discussions between the audience and the speakers (25 min)

