



Product Labelling for Improved End-of-Life Management

An investigation to determine the
feasibility of garment labelling to enable
better end-of-life management of
corporate clothing

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1 Executive summary

This report considers product labelling to improve end-of-life (EoL) management of corporate clothing, taking into account the process of development, provision, retrieval and disposal. It is based on a study which was mainly desk research but, in order to gain accurate perspectives of each stage, face to face interviews were conducted to gain opinions from best practice stakeholders across the lifecycle. These included suppliers (companies that offer / create corporate clothing garments), providers (organisations that require staff members to wear clothing/uniform that presents a corporate image) and clothing recycler / re-processors. A review of policy documents, information on labelling, reports and web based material has revealed issues that are likely to influence the position and future practice of suppliers and providers of corporate clothing.

We present, first, an overview of the role of eco-labelling within the contexts of government policy, financial revenue and market opportunities. This is followed by a brief explanation of the categorisation of the eco-labelling systems as they occur in the textiles industry. Tables in the Appendix present all the textiles eco-labels that were found through the research and those eco-labels that stipulate EoL management as part of their criteria for award are further examined. A major issue regarding eco-labelling is the cost, and this is considered with regard to manufacturers and buyers of corporatewear. The report ends by considering the issues for all the stakeholders and conducts a stakeholder analysis.

The report concludes with following recommendations:

- **To corporate clothing providers:** to capture a market opportunity and use eco-labels to promote their eco-credentials and to devise more efficient methods of recovering corporatewear to put into the reuse/recycle/ remanufacture routes.
- **To raw material and corporatewear clothing manufacturers:** source and use materials that are eco-labelled.
- **To government (as providers of uniforms / work wear):** to lead by example and encourage local authorities to use products with recognisable reuse/recyclable properties such as janitorial products (e.g. wipers)
- **To government (in their role as policy makers):** to recommend and stipulate a preference for eco-labelled corporatewear/fabrics wherever possible, in green public procurement policies and consider abolishing the tax tab, replacing with eco-label and stipulate that a proportion of any uniforms/clothing provided have the capacity to be re-worn (standard items that are not heavily branded), or reused (encourage the use of preferred pure blend fabrics).
- **To corporatewear wearers:** to be encouraged to return corporatewear to firms when they no longer use to ensure that it is placed into the

companies' EoL management systems for corporatewear – companies or government may consider some form of tax or levy until the uniform is returned.

- **To textile recyclers:** to encourage developing relationships with companies that provide corporatewear, and with corporatewear manufacturers to ensure that EoL management issues are considered throughout the product development and use phases of the lifecycle of the corporatewear.