

Textile Exchange Impact Tools – Program Integrity and Certification Assessment Request for Proposals

Background & introduction

Textile Exchange is a global nonprofit that creates leaders in the preferred fiber and materials industry. We build a community that can collectively accomplish what no individual or company can do alone.

With our Climate+ strategy, Textile Exchange is the driving force for urgent climate action on textile fiber and materials with a goal of 45% reduced CO2 emissions from textile fiber and material production by 2030. By benchmarking the industry and providing actionable tools for improvement, Textile Exchange is driving a race to the top.

With a robust membership representing leading brands, retailers, and suppliers, Textile Exchange is positively impacting the climate through accelerating the use of preferred fibers across the global textile industry.

Topic Background: Textile Exchange’s Impact Tools

Textile Exchange currently has two tools in development that are aimed at supporting decision-making in material selection and meeting the Climate+ goals.

The **Preferred Fiber and Material Matrix** aims to help apparel, footwear and home goods companies make informed sourcing decisions by providing transparent data and consolidated, validated guidance on over 65 of the industry’s most commonly used materials. Not merely a ranking, but a robust way to assess materials across broad impact areas, the PFM Matrix combines quantitative and qualitative data that allows for detailed comparisons within each specific material category. Impact criteria including soil health, water contamination, human rights, and animal welfare. Building on Gap Inc.’s Preferred Fiber Toolkit, the framework leverages existing tools like the Sustainable Apparel Coalition’s Higg Materials Sustainability Index (MSI), Textile Exchange’s Animal Welfare Framework, and third-party assessment of programs and certifications.

The **Global Fibre Impact Explorer**, originally created by Google and WWF, aims to provide brands with accurate and complete information to help them make more informed decisions about how they source their raw materials and address any issues in their current sources - ultimately helping to reduce their environmental impact. WWF experts and other leading environmental experts have contributed to the data framework and assessment.

For both of these tools, assessment of the relevant materials certifications and programs is an important component. The Certification Assessment Tool (CAT) built by WWF is currently used for this purpose in the Preferred Fiber and Material Matrix (PFMM) and the Global Fiber Impact Explorer (GFIE); this project will lead the evolution of this certification assessment functionality. Textile Exchange has already begun the process of building new components for some of the functions initially provided by the CAT.

Project Goals & Scope

This project aims to deliver a revision of the methodology for the assessment of program integrity and robustness.

This methodology should be designed to align with the ISEAL Codes of Best Practice and provide a framework for assessing a program’s governance, certification, accreditation, chain of custody, and standard-setting procedures. In alignment with the approach in the Preferred Fiber and Material Matrix, the methodology should provide the opportunity for programs to score against a collection of indicators that are assessed along a continuum of best practice. This means acknowledging that there are different levels of conformity to a concept, and a program may be beginning to address an issue without best-in-class performance.

The methodology will be used to replace the CAT in the Initiative Integrity section of the PFMM and as an input into the Global Fibre Impact Explorer tool currently under development.

The methodology should be reviewed by experts and should include a process for assessments of key raw material programs used by the apparel and textile industry. List of key programs for assessment will be identified by Textile Exchange.

Deliverables

- A methodology for assessment of program integrity and robustness to replace the existing CAT.
- A document outlining the new program integrity methodology and/or a program assessment rubric or model.
- Management of an internal (Textile Exchange) methodology review and an open stakeholder consultation, including:
 - Analysis and integration of stakeholder feedback.
 - Liaising with expert organizations as needed throughout the development of the methodology, including but not limited to ISEAL.
- Development and execution of a plan for assessment of all fiber and material programs currently in the PFMM (~70) against the new program integrity framework. This will likely need to be managed by a separate external consultant / third party in order to maintain neutrality.
- Support for the development of related elements of the GFIE and PFMM tools as needed.

Project Timeline (subject to change)

Proposals due	September 30
Project awarded	October 7
Project kickoff	As soon as possible in October pending consultant availability
Methodology development and documentation, including internal review and external consultation; third-party program assessment plan development	October-December 2022
Third party program assessment	January-February 2023
Integration into PFMM and GFIE tools	March 2023

Evaluation Criteria

We are ideally looking for an individual or organization with a deep understanding of ISEAL Codes of Practice, fair and impartial assessment processes, and a shared commitment to achieving beneficial outcomes connected to Climate+. The successful individual or organization will understand and have experience working with non-profit organizations and will have a proven track record in certification or verification systems working in agricultural and apparel industry contexts.

Other details & things to note

The key points of contact for this work will be:

- Beth Jensen, Director, Climate+ Impact (based in Colorado, USA)
- Samantha Pettifer, Senior Manager, Climate+ Impact Tools (based in UK; starting November 1, 2022)
- Siena Shepard, Manager, Climate+ Impact Tools and Tools Methodology Lead (based in Oregon, USA)

Other Textile Exchange team members will be available for workshops and meetings as necessary, including the Fiber and Materials team.

Textile Exchange is an entirely remote working organization. While the team is concentrated in the US, UK and EU, the organization has a global presence.

Selected Textile Exchange member organizations may also be invited to feed into this project, given their knowledge and research in preferred fiber and material supply chains.