

Swedish textile sustainability project turns water savings into profit for Indian suppliers

A water management project among textile suppliers in India, led by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and Swedish fashion brands Indiska, KappAhl and Lindex, has demonstrated how efficient resource management in textile production in India can achieve substantial environmental improvements and financial gains.

In an industry with low profit margins and negative environmental impact, the SWAR (Sustainable Water Resources Management) project showed that by implementing resource efficiency recommendations in production lines, savings in energy, chemicals, and water consumption lead to cost-savings in production and better environmental impact. The project design restructures production costs with water flow becoming a cost-carrier.

In Delhi national capital region alone, the Indian project partners implemented 85 different "low-hanging fruit" recommendations suggested by SWAR. The results were staggering: a 765% return on investment in one year and an average payback time of 11 days per project.

"SWAR has been much more effective than other resource management projects that we have undertaken in that it has gone beyond giving paper reports and has actually helped implement projects," says Mr. Mukesh Tomar of Maya Exports, one of the suppliers in the project.

In water-scarce Delhi, the project reduced total water consumption by an annual 84.5 million litres or 6.6% . It reduced electricity use by 3.4%, fuel by 4% and chemicals by 14% at supplier and sub-supplier levels. This resulted in an annual 1.7% saving in production costs for all 35 units. The recommendations include applying best-practices such as right-first-time chemical dyeing procedures, house-hold savings, rainwater harvesting, effective waste water treatment and reuse, as well as efficient boiler heating cycles.

"SWAR has been an eye opener for us and has been a learning platform for resource efficiency measures. We have already started implementing some of the projects suggested to us in our other factories as well," says Mr. Gopal Singh of Sargam Exports, one of the suppliers in the project.

In Jaipur – the project, together with traditional block-printers at the Jaipur Industrial Texcraft Park, developed a guidebook for sustainable resource use in their industry, but also built capacities at the park to prepare them for environmentally-friendly production.

Between Delhi and Jaipur, SWAR trained more than 60 per cent of all staff on the sustainable use of water, energy and chemicals.

Press contacts Mr. Rami Abdelrahman, SWAR Project Coordinator
Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), Tel: +46 720 50 60 33, Email: Rami.abdelrahman@siwi.org

Further information SWAR, Sustainable Water Resources Management for Textile Industries in Delhi and Jaipur, is implemented jointly by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and the Indian sustainability acceleration advisory firm cKinetics. It is financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), along with three Swedish fashion brands and 35 of their suppliers and sub-suppliers in Delhi and Jaipur.

Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) www.siwi.org Indiska www.indiska.com KappAhl www.kappahl.com Lindex www.lindex.com Sida www.sida.se

The Indian textile industry contributes 3 per cent to India's GDP, and employs more than 35 million people. The industry is the single largest industrial water polluter in India, and is facing serious growth limitations due to increasing shortage in freshwater availability. SWAR partners announced during the 2013 World Water Week in Stockholm that they will be intensifying their work with Indian partners during 2014 to expand SWAR's positive impact.

For more information, please contact:

Kaisa Lyckdal
Press Relations Manager, Lindex
Tel: 46 31 739 50 60
E-mail: kaisa.lyckdal@lindex.com

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