

Press release / blog text

The UK fashion and textiles industry unites to tackle the potential costly impacts of future Producer Responsibility.

QSA Partners (QSA) is being funded by Innovate UK's NICER programme 'Circular Economy for SMEs' to create an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) data sandbox for the UK fashion and textiles sector which will help the sector future-proof itself for producer responsibility legislation.

In collaboration with the UK Fashion and Textile Association (UKFT), the British Fashion Council, University of Exeter and supported by the British Retail Consortium (BRC) QSA will explore the use of an industry-led EPR system that incentivises circular economy principles across the supply chain and will enable a step-change in the adoption of circular approaches. Applicable to all supply chain players, the system will focus on fairly incentivising the reuse, refurbishment and resale of textile products.

We aim to create a market-based EPR system that is dynamic, flexible and adapts to the emergence of new technologies, retail systems and consumer behaviour. We will work with a range of garment producers and assess garment level data (such as fibre composition, fibre type) to understand the potential levers for different EPR mechanisms and how these impact different parts of the supply chain.

Gerrard Fisher, from QSA sets out the ambition for the project, "this project is looking at a radical and innovative approach to market data collation; any future EPR system needs to drive incentivisation to switch to circular options and disincentivise linear systems." Further, Adam Mansell, Chief Executive of UKFT, and chairperson for the project, highlights that "a future EPR system must accommodate all supply chain players that we have in abundance in the UK. To have a system that can bring all these players together and make positive and proactive improvements to the UK economy is paramount".

The opportunity this project presents to industry is huge, Caroline Rush CBE, Chief Executive of British Fashion Council outlines "The British fashion industry represents significant creative depth and reach in the UK and globally. We have an opportunity to develop an EPR system for fashion and textiles which focuses on maintaining value and longevity of garments to achieve a circular fashion ecosystem through reuse, refurbishment, and resale of products. An industry-led initiative like this has a chance to become an exemplar for others to follow."

Professor Peter Hopkinson, Director of the University of Exeter's CE-Hub, the coordinating Hub for the NICER Programme, said: "We are excited to develop systems based on the modern data capabilities brands and retailers have, and to be able to harness this complex and disperse industry data in ways that will provide accurate and relevant information on market share as well as 'product circularity scores'".

If you are a brand, retailer, platform or any other producer of garments and want to find out how to participate in the project, please contact us hello@qsapartners.co.uk

Can we help your business?

QSA Partners is a small and nimble team of experts in sustainability, resource efficiency and all things circular. We help clients unlock new business models that are more circular, lower impact and more profitable. Find out more about our services or contact us to see how we can help your business benefit. hello@qsapartners.co.uk

Notes for editors:

*The UK Government has indicated its intention to create an “Extended Producer Responsibility” (EPR) scheme for fashion and textile products. EPR is currently in place for packaging, e-waste and batteries - but all these systems were created before the advent of large-scale data systems. This project is unique because it aims to use industry data to develop a fair and level playing field for all companies **making** and selling clothing and textiles in the UK, and potentially create funds for supporting the development of world-leading recovery, sorting, reuse and recycling of clothing and textiles.*