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01
Introduction
The Higg Index Communications Guidelines outline how Higg Index users may communicate Higg Index performance.

The Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) strongly supports efforts by its members to promote the Higg Index as the leading global standard for sustainability reporting in the apparel, footwear, and textile industry.

One of the SAC’s key goals is that consumers will choose products based on transparent, trusted, and verified sustainability information. By promoting your company’s involvement with the SAC and use of the Higg Index, you help to make this vision a reality by accelerating awareness of the industry’s collective efforts to use a standardized language to communicate sustainability impacts and drive lasting improvements.

This manual provides guidance on:

☑️ How to share your company’s commitment to sustainability through its use of the Higg Index

☑️ What kinds of information can be shared publicly, through various communications and marketing channels

☑️ Who you can share this information with

☑️ Why some information can not be shared
Communicating Higg Facility Environmental Module Performance Publicly

Congratulations on completing the Higg Facility Environmental Module (Higg FEM)! If you completed third-party on-site verification of your Higg FEM assessment and posted your verified module on Higg.org, you may communicate your Higg FEM performance as outlined in this guide and in accordance with the Higg Index terms of use. Use the materials in the Higg FEM Beta Communication Toolkit to communicate your Higg FEM score and demonstrate your progress and leadership in environmental sustainability. Through voluntary disclosure of your Higg FEM performance, share your sustainability efforts with external business partners and show your commitment to value chain transparency.

Beta Toolkit

This beta Higg FEM Communications Toolkit is intended for the first phase of communicating Higg FEM performance. The SAC team will review feedback of the beta toolkits and update the toolkits for optimal use in future releases. This guide outlines how to use the Higg FEM communications toolkit.

The Higg FEM toolkit includes:

1. Performance Report
2. Badge
3. Impact Scorecard
4. Business Card
5. Icons

Audience & Approach

The communication toolkit is intended to help you communicate about your Higg FEM performance with your external business stakeholders, including: buyers, media, non-governmental organizations, investors, and governmental organizations. It features a layered approach — when used in conjunction with one another, the materials feature increasingly detailed information. You can also feature the communication tools in your internal communications, including company presentations, newsletters, and signs.
1. Performance Report

The Higg FEM performance report is the foundation of the Higg FEM Communication Toolkit. It features your facility’s Higg FEM score, and performance across environmental impact areas. If your facility posted third-party, on-site verified modules in 2018 and 2019, your report will feature year over year progress.

If you choose to publicly communicate Higg FEM performance, this report must always be made available, for example on your website. The report provides holistic information and ensures criteria of meaningful transparency are met. It is not permitted to communicate stand-alone scores without access to your report.

Suggested channels to publish the Higg FEM performance report:

- Company website
- Corporate Social Responsibility Report
- Make available per request by e-mail

Example sentences to include with the Higg FEM performance report on a website or corporate social responsibility report (CSR).

- In 2018, our facility reduced its energy use by X%.
- Our facility improved its water management system by recycling X gallons of water in 2018.
- Our facility is prioritizing reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We used Higg FEM to measure our emissions in 2018.
2. Badges

The toolkit includes a badge that shows your overall Higg FEM score. The badge provides an opportunity to show external parties your Higg FEM performance. External parties may also request to access the full report to learn more about your sustainability journey. The badge can be used online or offline. If the badge is featured online, the link to the full performance report must be included.

**Suggested channels to publish the badge:**

- Company website
- Social media: eg. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, other channels of your choice
- CSR Reports
- Presentations and slide decks
- Marketing materials

**DO**

Publish your badge on Linkedin, Instagram, and Facebook and provide the link to your performance report (see example).

Publish your badge on a banner used during a presentation or trade fair.

**DON’T**

Do not publish the badge without providing a link or access to the

Example: Badge on
3. Impact Scorecard

Publish the Higg FEM impact scorecard to showcase your facility’s holistic approach to environmental sustainability. The scorecard features your facility’s performance across the Higg FEM impact areas and provides the opportunity to show external parties what your total Higg FEM score is and how that score has been determined per impact area. The scorecard can be used online and offline.

**Suggested channels to publish the Higg FEM impact scorecard:**

- Company website
- Social media: eg. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, other channels of your choice
- CSR reports
- Presentations and slide decks
- Marketing materials

**Example sentences to feature with the Higg FEM impact scorecard:**

- The Higg Index helps us assess performance across seven environmental impact areas. From water use to chemicals management, we can use the Higg FEM to measure impacts holistically and make annual improvements.

4. Business Card

You can print your facility’s results on a business card format to hand out to your external contacts. The card features your facility’s verified Higg FEM performance. The card is double-sided. One side features your facility’s name and completion of a verified Higg FEM assessment; the other side features your facility’s Higg FEM performance.

**DO**

- Print your Higg FEM business card to give to your business partners during meetings and trade fairs.

**DON’T**

- Do not publish your business card online. It is a double sided tool.
Brands & Retailers
Communicating About Higg FEM

Facilities own their Higg FEM information and are provided with a communication toolkit. Brands and retailers that want to communicate their suppliers’ Higg FEM scores can only do so under the following conditions:

- **Consent of their suppliers:** Brands and retailers may invite (but not require) supply chain partners to share elements of the communication toolkit with them via email.
- **Channels & Audience:** After a supplier confirms that you can use the communication toolkit, a brand or retailer can use the score in their B2B public communications. Examples of suitable channels are CSR report or a supplier map. The audience for this communication is B2B as the information indicates how facilities measure and evaluate their environmental performance. Communication of this score in relation to a product is prohibited to prevent misinterpretation of the score as a ‘product sustainability indicator’. A score may only be communicated in relation to the specific facility in question. Contact SAC to learn more about their on-product communications work.
- **Layered approach:** As referenced in these guidelines, it is mandatory to follow the layered approach. Just like facilities, brands and retailers cannot

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5. Icons

You can feature the icons included in the toolkit on your website and CSR report. Only use them with the names provided and in relationship with the Higg FEM. When you use these icons, as with any icons provided by the SAC, we will create a common language, which will help our journey to a sustainable garment sector.

- ![Chemical Use and Management](image)
- ![Emissions To Air (if applicable)](image)
- ![Environmental Management Systems](image)
- ![Energy use](image)
- ![Greenhouse Gas Emissions](image)
- ![Waste Management](image)
- ![Wastewater](image)
- ![Water Use](image)
Communicating Accomplishments & Future Targets

If your facility has two consecutive assessments verified on-site by a third-party, your performance report will reflect Higg FEM performance of both years and the progress made between those years.

You can use this as an opportunity to share more information about your sustainability story. For example, elaborating about your efforts to reduce certain impacts. Sharing your company’s approach, helps contextualize your Higg FEM performance and is important to support external stakeholders’ understanding. When describing your accomplishments and future targets, it is important to be clear on how you took and plan to take the right steps to improve as illustrated below.

Example

Accomplishments

Our facility has improved 10 points in the Environmental Management System category, reaching the Leader Level, the highest level in the Higg FEM assessment.

Last year, we started at the Advanced Level. We reached the next level by offering our employees workshops on environmental management. Employees attend courses every 6 months that offer updates on the environmental management

Example

Future Target and Goals

Our facility is still at the beginner level for managing energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. We have a large facility and must first train our team to manage these areas. This will be a priority for us throughout the next two years, as we plan to hire an energy and emissions specialist.

In the first year (2020), we will focus on setting the baseline of our facility’s energy use. Currently, we track all our sources of energy and GHG emissions

Accomplishments

• Describe your improvement (points & level).
• Describe where you started in the previous year.
• Describe which policies, systems, and methods you used to make improvements in each assessment area.
• Describe how you plan to keep improving.

Future Targets and Goals

• Describe how you are addressing areas that may need improvement.
• Outline why certain areas are not yet a priority and when you will prioritize them.
• Describe the steps you will take to improve.
03
Higg Materials Sustainability Index Communication Guidelines
Higg Materials Sustainability Index

The Higg Materials Sustainability Index (Higg MSI) is the leading materials sustainability tool for the apparel, footwear, and textiles industry. It empowers brands, retailers, and manufacturers to select more sustainable materials in the products they design and manufacture.

Part of the Sustainable Apparel Coalition’s Higg Index, the Higg MSI calculates the impact of millions of possible material manufacturing variations.

The Value of Communicating Higg MSI Performance

• Transparently communicate the environmental impact of your company’s materials to attract new customers, demonstrate your leadership in the industry, and prove to external audiences that you are tracking toward your sustainability goals
• Show consumers and business partners you are committed to sustainability
• Bring stakeholders on your sustainability journey

Suggested Channels

• Product pages
• Company website
• Intranet
• Social media
• Press opportunities
• Speaking engagements
• CSR Reports

Suggested Audiences

• Employees
• Consumers
• NGOs
• Executives
• Board of Directors
• Business partners
Steps to Communicating your Higg MSI Performance

Follow these four steps to communicate Higg MSI performance to internal and external audiences:

1. Select whether you’ll communicate about a raw material or process, an example material, or a custom material.
2. Determine the claim you want to make and confirm that it meets these guidelines.
3. Include an attribution statement with your custom material claim.
4. Publish your claim.

Higg MSI Environmental Impacts

Using life-cycle assessment data, the Higg MSI assesses five environmental impacts of different materials and manufacturing processes. Use Higg MSI data to communicate how the materials your company uses perform in these areas.

The Higg MSI provides life-cycle impact assessment (LCIA) data for all listed material and manufacturing processes for licensed Higg MSI users. This includes data for the following impacts:

- **Global Warming Potential**
- **Nutrient Pollution in Water (Eutrophication)**
- **Water Scarcity**
- **Fossil Fuel Depletion**
- **Chemistry**

These impacts are translated into publicly available points.

You don’t need to communicate all impact areas at once. For example, you can just communicate global warming potential without having to include the other four impact areas.
Higg MSI Categories: Raw Materials and Processes, Example Materials, and Custom Materials

The Higg MSI assesses three overarching materials categories: raw materials and processes, example materials, and custom materials.

### Raw Materials and Processes

The Higg MSI includes hundreds of raw material and production process options. Users can combine these options in millions of ways to create a unique finished material. Raw material examples include organic cotton and recycled polyester (PET). Examples of production processes include spinning, knitting, batch dyeing, and waterproofing. Switching to a more sustainable option can significantly reduce a material’s environmental impact.

### Example Materials

The Higg MSI features more than 80 example materials. These examples represent materials commonly used in the industry. Example materials include: finished cotton, leather, polyester, nylon, jute, silk, and metals that are ready to be assembled into a product.

### Custom Materials

Companies can use the Higg MSI to assess the environmental impact of their specific materials. Higg MSI users can customize how their companies produce materials and use Higg MSI data to help them make more sustainable products.
Higg MSI Claims and Attribution Statements

A **Higg MSI claim** is any B2B or B2C communication about Higg MSI performance. Each Higg MSI claim for custom materials must be accompanied by a Higg MSI attribution statement.

*Example Claims*

*Example:* Switching from conventional polyester to recycled polyester reduces our raw material GWP by 30%.

*Example:* Switching from conventional polyester to recycled polyester reduces our finished material GWP by 10%.

A **Higg MSI attribution statement** is a statement linked to a Higg MSI claim that supports that claim and must include the Higg MSI version number and URL.

*Example Attribution Statement*

*Example:* Based on Higg MSI 3.0 data at Higg.org. Percentage reductions pertain to the raw material phase.
Rules to Communicate Higg MSI Performance

Environmental Claims

- Do not make general environmental claims like ‘green’ or ‘eco-friendly’ using the Higg MSI.
- Higg MSI claims should be clear and specific, referencing MSI scores and/or impacts in accordance with this communications guide.
- All Higg MSI scores and life-cycle impact assessment results can be communicated at the individual impact category level. Not all impacts need to be communicated together. For example, Global Warming Potential (kg CO$_2$e) can be communicated on its own, without the additional four environmental impacts.
- All claims must be accompanied by the Higg MSI URL and Higg MSI version number. The version number is shown on the Higg MSI dashboard.
- Claims are valid for two data updates. Data updates typically occur every six months and are indicated by an increased decimal point in the Higg MSI Version number (eg. v3.0 to v3.1). The SAC will communicate planned updates by month (e.g. the next scheduled update in January 2021).
- The Higg MSI attribution statement may be separated from the claim (like in a social media post or store signage). In this case, a footnote indicator ([1], *, etc.) must link to the attribution statement. For example, a company may link a social media post to the ecommerce page where the Higg MSI attribution statement is featured.
- The Higg MSI may not be used for comparative assertions with or against data from other external datasets. If there is a desire to make a comparative assertion, the data should be submitted through the Higg MSI Contributor to become part of the Higg MSI.
- All Higg MSI claims for customized materials should follow the guidance for selecting appropriate processes as per the Higg MSI How to Higg Guide. This ensures consistency across all users and claims.
Raw Materials and Production Processes

Scores

Higg MSI scores for an individual production process may be communicated B2B and B2C. These scores can be found publicly at Higg.org.

Example: The Higg MSI Global Warming Potential score for bamboo fiber is 5.6.

Example: The Higg MSI Fossil Fuel Depletion score for conventional PET is 5.1; for mechanically recycled PET, it is 0.5.

Higg MSI Contributors may communicate their Higg MSI scores and LCIA results B2B and B2C. Submit inventory data to the Higg Product Tools so users can select your raw material or production process when assessing a material (Higg MSI) or product (Higg Product Module).

LCIA environmental impacts may be communicated B2B and B2C in absolute or relative differences between two processes.

Example: In 2018, our fiber footprint total CO$_2$e was 10,000 tons. We reduced this footprint by 30% in 2019 by switching to more recycled materials.

Aggregated impact data, like the example above, may be used to report public standards, such as Carbon Disclosure Program.
DONT

- Do not communicate LCIA results of individual raw materials or processes.
- Do not communicate B2B or B2C any Higg MSI production process data modified by your company for internal scoring purposes.
- Do not use Higg MSI production process data to create a new scoring methodology that publicly reports modified life-cycle impact assessment information.

Sample Prohibited Statements – DO NOT USE

- According to the Higg MSI, the water scarcity associated with batch dyeing 1 kg of acetate fabric is 0.72 m$^3$.
- Our dyeing processes were 5 kg CO$_2$e per kg material based on Higg MSI data and modified by using internal data.

LCIA Results

If your company has submitted data to the Higg MSI, it may communicate LCIA results for raw materials and production processes that it has submitted B2B & B2C.

Example: Lenzing may tell its customers the kg CO$_2$e and Higg MSI points associated with the production of Tencel$^{TM}$ as calculated in the Higg MSI.

Example Materials

Scores

Users may disclose example material impact category scores B2B and B2C. These scores can be found publicly available on Higg.org.
LCIA Results

Users may not publicly disclose any of the five Higg MSI LCIA results for example materials.

Example – with attribution statement assumed elsewhere

- The Higg MSI Global Warming Potential score for 1 kg of polyurethane foam is 4.82.

Sample Prohibited Statements – DO NOT USE

- The Global Warming Potential for 1 kg aluminum is 9.6 kg CO₂e.

Custom Materials

Scores

Custom materials are not verified, therefore, you may only communicate Higg MSI scores for custom materials B2B. An attribution statement must disclose that custom materials are not verified.

Example custom material claim: B2B – The Higg MSI Eutrophication score for our recycled goose down is 0.7.

Example custom material attribution statement: B2B – These results were calculated using the Higg Materials Sustainability Index (Higg MSI at Higg.org) V3.0 developed by the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC). They were calculated by [insert company name] and are not verified.
LCIA Results

You may communicate the LCIA results of a custom material B2B and B2C.

You may communicate the LCIA results of material changes that have occurred as a result of changing a process or raw material.

Sample Approved Statements

- The water scarcity impact for 1 kg of our recycled cotton fabric is 4.3 m³.
- The eutrophication for our spring 2020 material portfolio is 432 kg PO₄ₑ.
- By switching from polyester to recycled polyester we have reduced CO₂ₑ by 2.6 kg per kg fabric.

An attribution statement must disclose that custom materials are not verified.

Example Attribution statement for a custom material: “These results were calculated using the Higg Materials Sustainability Index (Higg MSI at msi.higg.org) V3.0 developed by the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC). They were calculated by [insert company name] and are not verified.”

Sample Prohibited Statement - DO NOT USE

- B2C: The Higg MSI Water Scarcity score for our recycled polyester fabric is 25 (because custom materials are not verified).
04
Higg Product Module Communication Guidelines
Higg Product Module

The Higg Product Module (Higg PM) enables companies to assess a product’s cradle-to-gate impacts* and develop more sustainable products consistently across the industry. The tool shows how products in a given category compare to one another and what production stages and processes contribute the largest environmental impact.

The Value of Communicating Higg PM Performance

- Transparently communicate the environmental impact of your company’s products to attract new customers, demonstrate your leadership in the industry, and prove to external audiences that you are tracking towards your sustainability goals.
- Show consumers and business partners you are committed to sustainability.
- Bring stakeholders on your sustainability journey.

Suggested Channels

- Product pages
- Company website
- Social media
- Press inquiries
- CSR Reports

Suggested Audiences

- Employees
- Consumers
- NGOs
- Executives
- Board of Directors
- Business Partners

*The Higg PM will assess full life cycle cradle-to-grave impacts in 2021, including product care, end of use, and duration of service.
Higg PM Environmental Impacts

Using life cycle assessment data, the Higg PM assess five environmental impacts of a product’s life cycle. Use the Higg PM data to communicate how your company’s products perform in these areas.

The Higg PM Assesses:

- Global Warming Potential (GWP)
- Nutrient Pollution in Water (Eutrophication)
- Water Scarcity
- Fossil Fuel Depletion
- Chemistry

You don’t need to communicate all impact areas at once. For example, you can just communicate global warming potential without having to include the other four impact areas.
Higg PM: Assessing a Finished Product

The Higg PM leverages the Higg MSI directly for the material assessment.

In the Higg PM, users pull materials from the Higg MSI into a Bill of Materials (BOM). This means they enter the materials and amount of each material featured in a product, including packaging.

Example: Enter the amount of Rubber Outsole, an EVA Foam midsole, a cotton upper, and polyester laces in a pair of shoes.

Once the Bill of Materials is complete, users enter the finished goods processes that take place to turn those materials into a final product that is ready to be shipped.

Example: Die Cutting, Computer Stitching, Skiving, Heat Pressing, Lasting, Gluing, and Hole Punching

Once all materials and finished goods processes are entered, the user receives the product production footprint.
Higg PM Claims and Attribution Statements

A **Higg PM claim** is any B2B or B2C communication about Higg PM performance. Each Higg PM claim must be accompanied by a Higg PM attribution statement.

**Example Claims**

- **Example:** The cradle-to-gate water scarcity impact for the Star 10 T-Shirt is 5.2 m³.

- **Example:** The Global Warming Potential for the production (cradle-to-gate) of our spring 2020 portfolio is 5,432 kg CO₂e.

A **Higg PM attribution statement** is a statement linked to a Higg PM claim that supports the claim and must include the Higg PM version number and URL.

**Example Attribution Statement**

- **Example:** This information was calculated using the Higg Product Module 1.0 at Higg.org. They were calculated by [enter company name] and are not verified. They include cradle-to-gate impacts only.
Rules to Communicate Higg PM Performance

• Do not make general claims like ‘green’ or ‘eco-friendly’ using the Higg PM.

• Claims should be clear and specific, referencing Higg PM impacts in accordance with this communications guide.

• All Higg PM Life Cycle Impact Assessment (LCIA) results (also known as midpoints) can be communicated at the individual impact category level. Not all impacts need to be communicated together. For example, Global Warming Potential (kg CO$_2$e) can be communicated on its own, without the remaining four environmental impacts.

• All claims must be accompanied by the Higg PM URL and Higg MSI/PM version number. The version number is shown on the Higg PM dashboard.

• Claims are valid for two data updates. Data updates typically occur every six months. SAC will communicate planned updates by month (e.g. next scheduled update in January 2021).

• The Higg PM attribution statement may be separated from the claim (like in a social media post or store signage). In this case, a footnote indicator ([1], *, etc.) must link to the attribution statement. For example, a company may link a social media post to the ecommerce page where the Higg PM attribution statement is featured.

• The Higg PM may not be used for comparative assertions with or against data from other external datasets.
Finished Goods Processes

Users may communicate Higg PM LCIA results in absolute or relative differences between two processes B2B and B2C.

Higg PM finished goods process data cannot be used to create a new product scoring methodology that publicly reports modified LCIA information. It must be used in conjunction with Higg PM assessment methodology. Product methodology that is modified for internal use and/or aggregate reporting (e.g. CDP) is permitted.

Higg MSI Contributors who submit data for a finished goods process can communicate the Higg PM LCIA results of that process B2B and B2C.

Example finished goods process claim: By switching from screen printing to digital printing we reduced our annual carbon footprint by 32 tons CO$_2$e.

Example production process attribution statement: Based on Higg PM 1.0 data at Higg.org. Percentage reductions pertain to product assembly.

Sample Prohibited Statement - DO NOT USE

- The GWP for digital printing one small t-shirt is 0.5 CO$_2$e. (Unless you submitted data for that digital printing process).
- Our stockfitting processes were 5 kg CO$_2$e per product based on Higg PM data and modified by using internal data.
Product Production Footprint

Users may communicate:

- LCIA results of a cradle-to-gate product B2B and B2C
- LCIA results of material or production changes that have occurred
- Aggregated LCIA results B2B and B2C

The attribution statement must include the source, Higg PM version number, and disclose that products are not verified and cover production impacts only.

Example 1 product claim: The cradle-to-gate GWP impact for the Star 10 T-Shirt is 9.6kg CO₂e.

Example 2 product claim: The GWP for the production (cradle-to-gate) of our spring 2020 portfolio is 5,432 kg CO₂e.

Example product attribution statement: These results were calculated using the Higg Product Module 1.0 (Higg PM 1.0 at Higg.org) developed by the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC). They were calculated by [enter company name] and are not verified. They include cradle-to-gate impacts only.