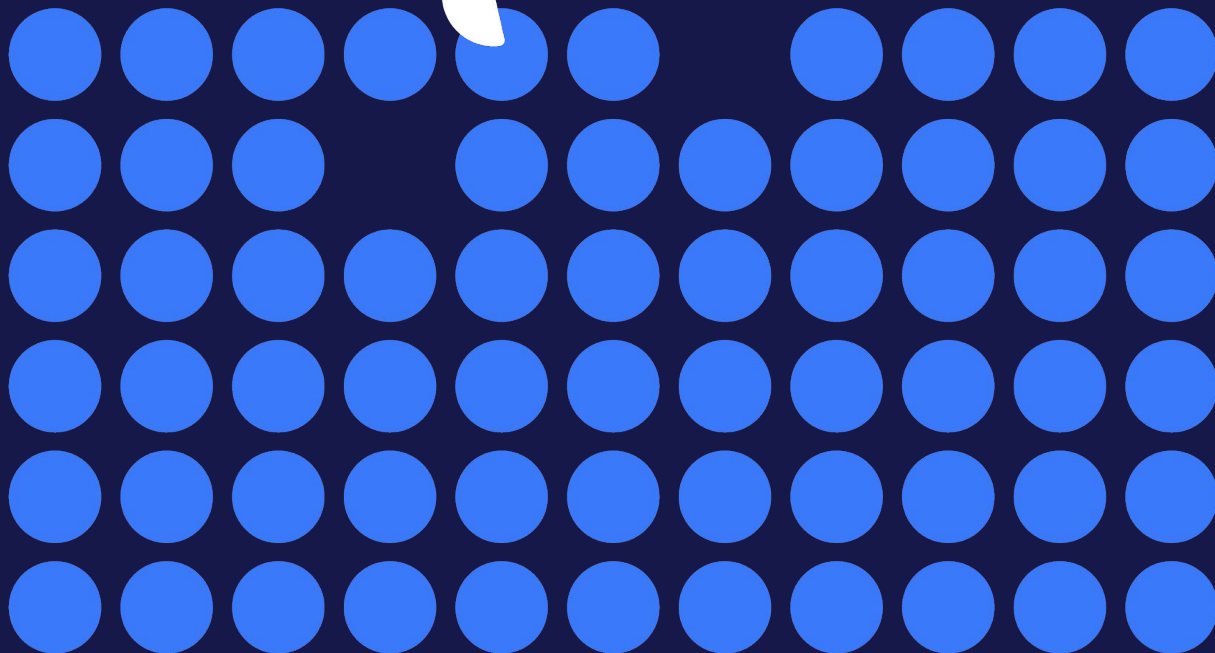


Executive Summary: Cascale Annual Meeting

**Hong Kong
2025**



Reflections from **Hong Kong**

*And with that we close the chapter on another successful and inspiring Cascalé Annual Meeting. Under the theme “A Movement for All,” this year’s Annual Meeting 2025 focused on the critical challenges and transformative opportunities facing our industry. We saw **700** attendees, over **100** speakers across **five** stages, and **33** sponsors come together from around the world, all with the intention to accelerate action.*

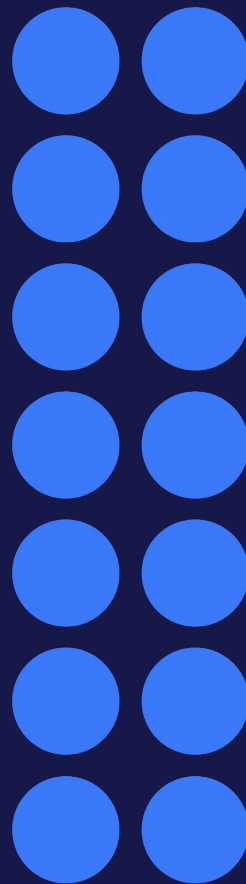
Given our immense growth in the APAC region and the enduring commitment of members there, Hong Kong was the ideal location and convening platform to accelerate solutions in a pre-competitive space, together. Given the macroeconomic climate, we know that this year especially, presented challenges to members and the industry more widely.

We wholeheartedly appreciate the presence of the attendees, sponsors, staff, and wider community of stakeholders for making this happen and for those who extended their support worldwide. At Cascalé, we know to move the needle on combating climate change and supporting decent work for all, every part of the value chain must be at the table. At this year’s Annual Meeting, we witnessed voices come together to shape a consumer goods industry that gives back more than it takes to the planet and its people.

Thank you for making this one unforgettable and please join us next year in Greece.

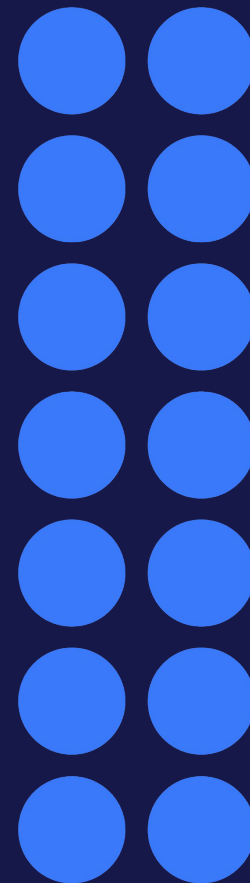


—Lee Green, VP, Marketing & Communications



Executive Summary **Contents**

- A Letter of Gratitude
- Sponsors in Action & Networking
- Experiential
 - Makers' Corner, Wellness, Simulations, and More!
- Main Stage Session Summaries
- High-Level Recaps of Stages
 - Impact
 - Connections
 - Solutions
 - Virtual
 - Roundtables
- Closing Resources



Networking Moments



Welcome Reception

As Platinum Sponsors of the Annual Meeting 2025, **Li & Fung** and **LFX** helped host the Welcome Reception ahead of the event kickoff. Overlooking the harbor, the reception offered a collective space for networking and celebration.

Utilizing Cascale's comment feature in the proprietary event app, one attendee commented: "We had a wonderful experience at the welcome ceremony of Cascale organized by Li & Fung. The program was very well arranged, creating a warm and festive atmosphere of the event."



Sponsors in Action



Sponsors in Action



Makers' Corner



Wellness Sessions

Nike returned this year as the wellness sponsor for the Annual Meeting 2025, sharpening the agenda with high-energy workouts and restorative yoga flows to help attendees navigate the packed programming with ease.

On Day 1, Nike master trainer Utah Lee kicked off the morning agenda with a dynamic HIIT (High-Intensity Interval Training) session. With a strong turnout, the energizing group workout captured the theme “A Movement for All,” with collective movement and strength building.

On Day 2, Lee turned the pace down a notch and guided attendees with a rejuvenating morning yoga session and a view of the harbor. Attendees centered their minds, grounded their bodies after a full day, and prepared for another exciting day of collaboration and innovation.



Simulations



Cascale Annual Meeting attendees took part in Crossroads Foundation's **"Struggle for Survival"** simulation. Through this immersive experience, participants stepped into the shoes of those living at the base of global supply chains and faced the pressures and impossible choices that millions encounter every day.

*"The Struggle for Survival experience was eye-opening and having it as a kick-off activity for the Cascale Annual Meeting felt very fitting....The simulation was a **powerful reminder** that behind every data point are people. And these people are navigating daily survival with stakes much higher than ours.*



This experience gave me a glimpse into the hard trade-offs that come when even basic needs aren't guaranteed, and it underscored the responsibility we carry to make sure the conversations we have this week, and ongoing, don't just stay theoretical. We owe it to the people behind the numbers to turn them into change." – **Better Buying's Katie Hess on her reflections.**

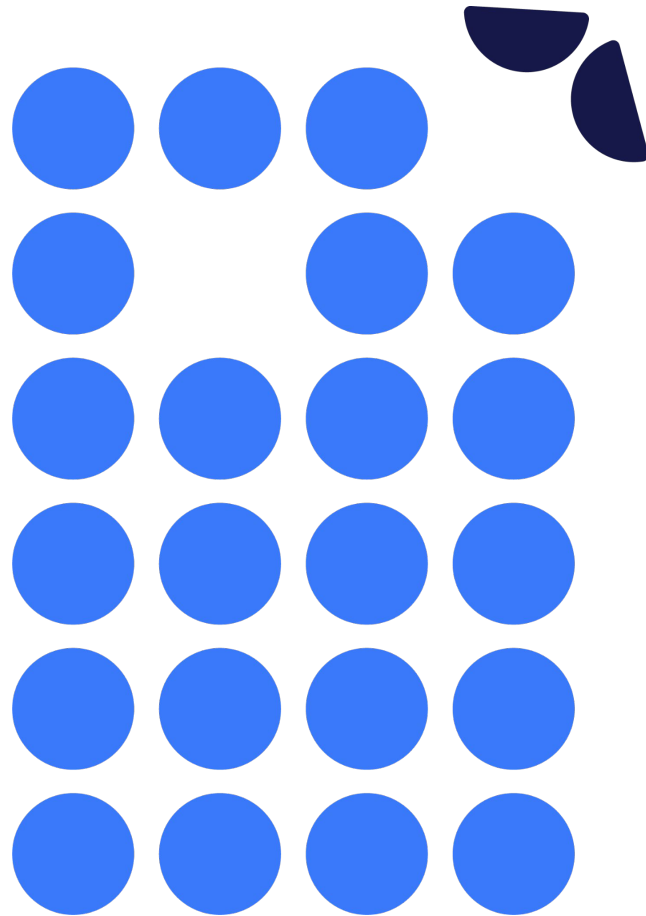


Community **Convened**



Day 1

Relive the Annual Meeting
2025 with the full Main Stage
Session Summaries.



Opening Ceremony Kicks Off Cascale Annual Meeting 2025 With Rallying Call for Collective Action

With Hong Kong as the center, the rich traditions of drumming and dance took center stage at the opening ceremony of the Cascale Annual Meeting 2025. The event opened with a powerful call to action under the theme “A Movement for All.” Moderated by host Isabelle Kumar, the high-energy opener set the tone for two days of cross-sector collaboration focused on climate action and decent work.

Speakers:

- Isabelle Kumar – Award Winning Journalist, Presenter, Moderator, former News Anchor, moderator



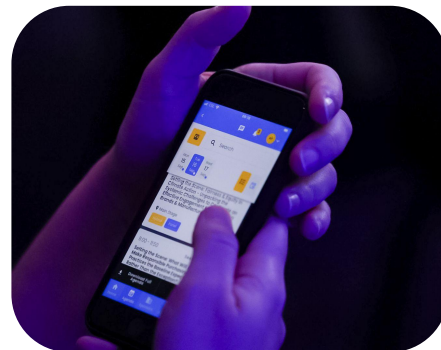
This year's program centered on two interconnected tracks: accelerating progress on climate goals and embedding responsible purchasing practices as a baseline expectation, not an exception. Sessions throughout the event focused on actionable solutions to the two problem statements.

Two Problem Statements:

1. What is the specific engagement model between brands and manufacturers that will effectively unlock the necessary decarbonization efforts to meet science-based targets?
2. What will it take to make responsible purchasing practices the standard, rather than the exception, in the consumer goods industry?

Attendees were encouraged to engage through the event app, which features tools for personalizing agendas, connecting with peers and participating in interactive elements like polls and word clouds. Kumar emphasized the importance of clear communication, inclusivity and avoiding jargon to foster deeper dialogue.

With members of the global value chain in the room and online, the tone was one of urgency and empowerment. "The power is in this room—and beyond," Kumar said. "Transformation is only possible when we move together."





Welcome Interview: Fireside Chat with Harsh Saini

In the opening fireside chat, moderator Isabelle Kumar introduced Harsh Saini, interim CEO of Cascale, who acknowledged the organization's evolution and reaffirmed its mission. Saini emphasized Cascale's role as an enabler — supporting members with credible tools, partnerships, and data to drive collective action.

Speakers:

- Isabelle Kumar – Award Winning Journalist, Presenter, Moderator, former News Anchor, moderator
- Harsh Saini – Interim Chief Executive Officer, Cascale

Key Takeaways:

- Strong foundation, forward focus
- Collective action through tools and partnerships
- People-centered progress across the value chain

With strong member and staff engagement, particularly across the APAC region, the organization continues to expand its impact through programs like the Higg Index, decarbonization efforts, and responsible purchasing practices. Saini shared that the APAC region saw the highest growth rate of new Cascale members in 2024 to 2025, with 20 new APAC members joining across the time period. She also gave a shoutout to new Hong Kong-based members including Eralda, HQTS, and Openview, among others.

Throughout the conversation, Saini highlighted the importance of equity, listening deeply, and aligning around measurable outcomes. The session concluded with a preview of the day's programming, designed to foster connection, share insights, and catalyze progress — together.



Opening Keynote: A Movement for All: From Ambition to Action to Impact

In a powerful keynote, Joseph Phi, chief executive officer of Li & Fung, challenged the industry to move beyond ambition and take decisive, collaborative action on climate change. Phi emphasized that sustainability is no longer a value-add — it's a business imperative. He underscored the interconnected nature of climate disruption, citing cascading supply chain impacts from recent global floods and heatwaves.

Speakers:

- Joseph Phi – CEO, Li & Fung

Key Takeaways:

- Climate change is the single biggest disrupter of global supply chains
- Embedding ESG into business strategy accelerates measurable impact
- Collective, cross-sector action is essential to industry-wide progress



"It's only by working together can we turn ESG ambition into action and action into impact." Phi outlined systemic barriers — from short-term ROI thinking to greenwashing backlash — that hinder climate progress. Yet, he pointed to hope in investor trends, consumer demand shifts, and data-driven design. Drawing from Li & Fung's own transformation, he described a pragmatic ESG roadmap grounded in measurement, adaptability, and deep integration across operations.

Phi urged the industry to reject the false tradeoff between resilience and sustainability. "Sustainability is not about saving the planet from business," he concluded. "It's about saving business on a changing planet."





Setting the Scene: Fairness & Equity in Climate Action – Unpacking the Systemic Challenges to Co-Create an Effective Engagement Model

This session, moderated by Cascale's Jeremy Lardeau, set the stage for the event's "Climate Action Track." Lardeau framed the central challenge that threads through the 15 sessions in the track starting with the need for a fair, equitable, and effective engagement model between brands and manufacturers to accelerate climate action. The panel brought together voices from across the value chain— including YKK, PUMA, CIEL Textile, and the International Apparel Federation — to unpack the systemic and structural challenges limiting progress on decarbonization in the apparel sector.

Speakers:

- **Jeremy Lardeau – Senior Vice President, Higg Index, Cascale**
- Brian La Plante – Senior Manager Sustainability, YKK
- Veronique Rochet – Senior Director Sustainability, PUMA SE
- Quentin Thorel – Group Head of Sustainability, CIEL Textile
- Matthijs Crietee – Secretary General, International Apparel Federation (IAF)

A key theme throughout the discussion was the lack of equity in how the burden of decarbonization is distributed. Brands often expect rapid reductions in emissions without fully acknowledging the supply-side barriers — especially for small-and-medium-sized manufacturers operating in the Global South under constrained policy, financial, and technological conditions.

YKK's Brian La Plante shared findings from a new report co-authored through the UNFCCC Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action's Manufacturer Climate Action Working Group. PUMA's Veronique Rochet outlined the brand's integrated approach, stressing internal alignment and supplier engagement through data-driven, pragmatic tools. CIEL Textile's Thorel called for redefined brand-manufacturer partnerships rooted in "co-ownership," fair cost-sharing, and inclusive governance. Panelists agreed that while some brands lead with a long-term vision, others remain driven by price, presenting challenges for manufacturers who face the greatest transformation burden. The group also discussed the role of manufacturers in local policy advocacy, with support from brands to ensure scalability and legitimacy. As the session concluded, it reinforced that climate progress hinges on trust, transparency, and collective ambition.

Key Takeaways:

- Commercial alignment must support decarbonization goals
- Manufacturers need a seat at the policy and planning table
- Brand-supplier partnerships require transparency and co-ownership



The Green Deal's New Chapter: Are Europe's Simplification Efforts Rewriting the Global Sustainability Story?

In this policy-framed session, panelists examined how recent adjustments to the EU Green Deal, such as strategic delays and the shelving of initiatives like green claims, are shaping the global sustainability landscape. The session was moderated by GIZ's Felicia Hoeer. Together, panelists unpacked the regulatory shift's ripple effects, touching on the growing influence and readiness of manufacturers and suppliers, especially in the APAC region.

Speakers:

- **Felicia Hoeer – Project Manager Green Button, GIZ Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit**
- Jonathan Salmon – Head of Sustainability, Li & Fung
- Marina Prados Espinola – Director, Policy Hub – Circularity for Apparel & Footwear
- Sally Peng – Senior Managing Director, FTI Consulting & Vice Chairman, AmCham Hong Kong



Hoer set the context. “Let us remember that our sustainability story is long and has been transitioning over the past several years from voluntary initiatives, mainly, to mandatory with Europe taking a lead with the Green Deal which covers a lot of regulations under its scope.”

Panelists explored how the EU’s Green Deal is shifting through simplification measures, including the omnibus package, and what this means for the global supply chain. Policy Hub’s Prados Espinola emphasized the interconnection of regulatory tools like the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the Eco-Design for Sustainable Products Regulation, noting the domino effect on other policies. Li & Fung’s Salmon highlighted manufacturers’ need for preparedness, stressing that many lack resources to adapt quickly. FTI Consulting’s Peng underscored Hong Kong’s and APAC’s role in bridging global compliance, stressing the need for education and translation of policies for regional stakeholders. GIZ’s Hoer reminded participants that voluntary actions remain crucial alongside mandatory rules. Together, the speakers pointed to APAC’s potential to drive sustainability progress if industry and policymakers act collectively.

Key Takeaways:

- EU regulatory changes create uncertainty but also opportunities for APAC to lead
- Collaboration, data readiness and proactive industry engagement are critical for compliance and progress.
- Voluntary action and innovation remain essential complements to policy frameworks.





Designing the Next Chapter of Responsible Purchasing Practices with Cascale

This workshop session engaged members in a collaborative dialogue around responsible purchasing practices (RPPs). Cascale's Katie Hess unveiled a first look at combined insights from Cascale's Better Buying tools and the Higg Index, providing a dual-lens view of supplier and brand perspectives.

First, Hess shared a high-level roadmap of where RPPs are headed and queued up the co-creation aspect in which attendees offered solutions. She gave an overview of Better Buying's tools including Better Buying Purchasing Practices Index (BBPPI), Better Buying Partnership Index (BBPI), and Cascale's Higg Brand & Retail Module (Higg BRM).

Speakers:

- Katie Hess – Head of Product, Better Buying, Cascale

“Supplier voice is at the heart of Better Buying surveys. That’s what makes these tools different. They reflect the lived reality of suppliers, and that’s why they’re central to Cascale’s RPP roadmap.” Hess touched on year-over-year data from the tools, showcasing how suppliers and buyers view their improvement. According to the BBPPI data across 2023 to 2025, suppliers consistently rank “Planning and Forecasting” among the top priority for buyer improvement. Hess also touched on macroeconomic indicators such as tariffs causing recent shifts. In all, those suppliers and buyers engaged in the tools saw better improvement in RPP.

The session summarized Cascale’s phased RPP roadmap — focused first on adoption, then accountability — and encouraged members to co-create solutions that address blockers to uptake. Emphasis was placed on the power of supplier feedback to spark internal alignment and on actionable next steps to scale participation across the industry.

Key Takeaways:

- Supplier and brand data reveal key alignment gaps
- Cascale’s roadmap prioritizes scalability and accountability
- Co-creation is essential to scale responsible purchasing



A Special Announcement with Rick Ridgeway & a Special Guest

In a heartfelt session, Rick Ridgeway, Cascale co-founder, reflected on the original intent behind the Higg Index: to create tools that empower the entire industry to take credible, aligned climate and social action. Ridgeway emphasized that the mission remains as urgent as ever and underscored the importance of unity in driving measurable impact. He also touched on Cascale's origins and the enduring business case for sustainability, among them boosting employee retention, courting investor interest, saving money, and enhancing reputation.

Speakers:

- **Rick Ridgeway – President, Rick Ridgeway Productions, Inc.**
- **Scarlette Tapp – Executive Director, Sustainable Furnishings Council (SFC)**



“It involved this key idea of scaling to other sectors. That was the core reason two years ago we rebranded as Cascale and its sister organization Worldly, so that by working together we could provide verified measurement with primary data using the Higg Index for the whole consumer goods supply chain.”

He was then joined by a special guest – Scarlett Tapp, executive director of the Sustainable Furnishings Council (SFC) – to deliver a forward-looking announcement. The duo shared the news that Cascale is acquiring the key assets of SFC. Tapp shared more of SFC’s origins, having formed in 2006 in High Point, North Carolina, as a multi-stakeholder membership organization for sustainability in home furnishings. Reinforcing Cascale’s continued leadership and commitment to collective progress, the move with SFC will aim to scale sustainability within the home furnishings category and speaks to many aligned values.

“Having Cascale’s voice and leadership, which is on the global stage as a convener once a year with the Annual Meeting and the Cascale Forums. That is such a dramatic way for us to quickly get our message out because we know we’re up against a clock. Climate change is a crisis. Our team knew that we needed to scale up to stay relevant to what we’re doing, and furnishings is a major contributor,” underscored Tapp.

Key Takeaways:

- Reinforced vision behind the Higg Index: to create tools that empower the entire industry to take credible, aligned climate and social action
- Enduring belief in collective industry action
- Cascale’s acquisition of SFC’s key assets highlights momentum-building





Power, Partnership, and Purchasing: Rewiring the Brand-Supplier Relationship

Moderator Isabelle Kumar opened the c-suite panel with a frank assessment of industry progress toward 2030 sustainability goals, asking panelists to rate the sector's trajectory. Puma's Anne Laure Descours remained optimistic, while Epic Group's Dinesh Gope Virwani and TAL's Roger Lee pointed to tariffs and geopolitical instability as factors slowing momentum. Ed Lam of LFX stressed that fragmented efforts and a lack of coordination continue to hinder progress.

Speakers:

- **Isabelle Kumar – Award-Winning Journalist, Presenter, Moderator, Former News Anchor**
- Anne Laure Descours – Advisor Sustainability, PUMA
- Dinesh Gope Virwani – Executive Vice Chairman, Epic Group
- Ed Lam – CEO, LFX & Executive Board Director, Li & Fung
- Roger Lee – CEO, TAL Apparel Limited

Speakers highlighted the need for deeper trust and direct engagement between brand leaders and manufacturers. Descours emphasized that without long-term commitments, suppliers cannot invest in sustainable production. Lam called for systemic alignment and frequent industry convenings to advance shared roadmaps. Lee underscored the importance of tangible benchmarks to secure C-suite commitment.

Panelists agreed Cascale can play a central role in bridging gaps across tiers, building shared knowledge, and creating opportunities for CEOs to engage directly on factory floors. The discussion underscored that sustainability is both a business imperative and a shared responsibility across the value chain.

Key Takeaways:

- Traditional sourcing limits climate progress
- Long-term partnerships foster shared accountability; brand CEOs need to visit the factory floor
- Business model shifts are enabling value chain impact



Closing Keynote: A Movement for All: Hope in the Age of Transformation

David J. Begbie closed the meeting with a keynote that reenergized Cascale members' commitment to sustainability and equity. He urged attendees to remain steadfast in the face of global disruption, emphasizing that today's actions will shape tomorrow's industry.

Begbie grounded his message in personal experience, recounting the origins of the Crossroads Foundation, which connects NGOs with business resources and conducts immersive refugee simulations. He reflected on scaling secondhand clothing aid from Hong Kong to more than 100 countries, eventually working alongside the United Nations to expand impact.

Speakers:

- David J. Begbie – Co-Founder & Director, Crossroads Foundation



He highlighted how Crossroads' 10th anniversary challenged traditional philanthropy, replacing a fundraising dinner with a 24-hour refugee camp simulation for CEOs to experience "a fraction of what it is like for the people we serve." Begbie noted that many companies have pivoted their business models after these programs, harnessing their expertise to address urgent needs. Acknowledging global challenges, Begbie offered a message of hope, stressing that leaders must use their platforms for meaningful change. "This cannot be a movement for some," he said. "It must be a movement for all."

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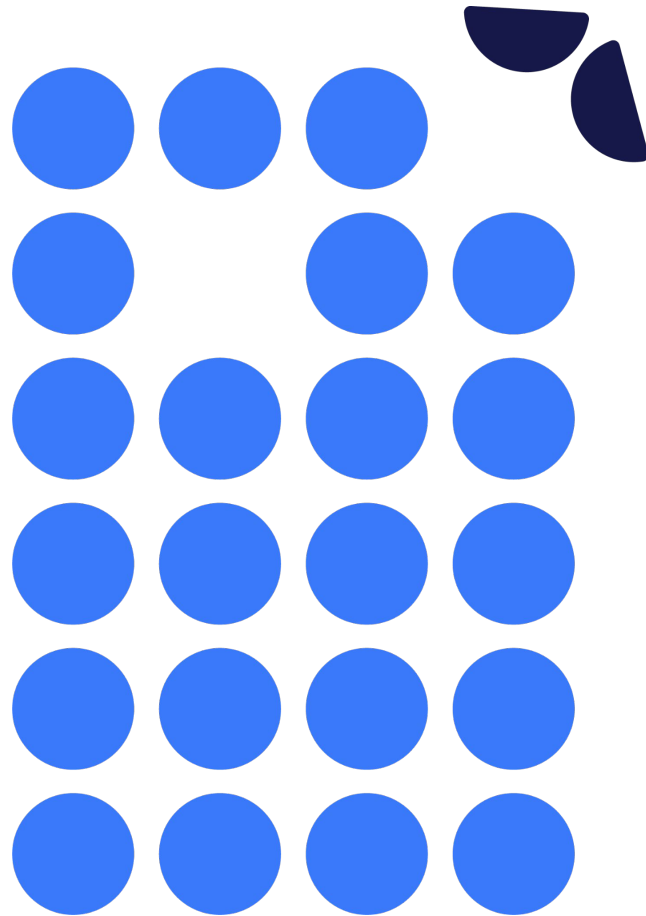
Key Takeaways:

- Together, we find purpose in sustainability efforts
- Industry transformation starts with solving a real world need
- Through real, lived experiences we inspire collective hope for a just future



Day 2

Relive the Annual Meeting
2025 with the full Main Stage
Session Summaries.



Opening Keynote: Sustainability as a Catalyst for Business Longevity, Innovation and Leadership

MAS Holdings' CEO Suren Fernando opened Day 2 with a keynote connecting sustainability to business longevity and innovation. He emphasized how bold sustainability actions strengthen leadership and build resilience amid evolving market demands. Leaning on MAS Holdings' unique manufacturing perspective, his insights framed sustainability as a strategic catalyst that not only safeguards the future but also unlocks new growth opportunities for companies ready to lead the change.

Speakers:

- Suren Fernando – Chief Executive Officer, MAS Holdings (Pvt) Ltd



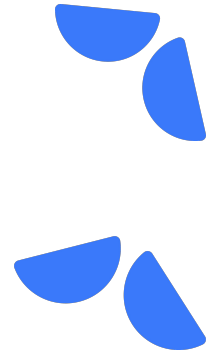
He shared seven key lessons: including driving change from the top, centering purpose at the core, taking a formal approach to sustainability strategy, forming a journey rooted in learning and upskilling, crafting intentional interdependent partnerships, holding steady through disruption, and staying the course through change.

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“What we have found essential is to work with partners who believe, like we do, that sustainability is a driver of resilience – not a tradeoff against it. This alignment of values, priorities, and goals is what enables us to navigate complexity together – to co-create and hold each other accountable through the change. It’s a partnership model built on trust, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to systemic change.”

Key Takeaways:

- Sustainability drives lasting business value
- Bold action unlocks innovation
- Leadership and resilience go hand in hand



Climate Adaptation: Understanding Climate Risks & Building Resilience in the Supply Chain

This session highlighted the urgent need to address climate adaptation in the apparel supply chain, where extreme weather increasingly disrupts manufacturing and communities. Epic's Vidhura Ralapanawe started with a presentation revealing the urgency of the climate crisis, showcasing real-time examples in Bangladesh and Pakistan, updated data, and case studies meant to urge attendees into action.

He highlighted how we have entered the "era of climate breakdown," meaning previous climate models are outdated, and climate adaptation is now necessary. Afterwards, a panel covered the gaps in data and knowledge across supply chain tiers.

Speakers:

- **Kim van der Weerd – CEO, Fashion Producer Collective**
- Dr. Vidhura Ralapanawe – Executive Vice President, Epic Group
- Dr. Thiwanka De Fonseka – Chief Sustainability Officer, Komar
- Abhishek Bansal – Vice President, Sustainability, Arvind Limited
- Dr. Joyce Tsoi – Senior Director, Decarbonization Programs, Cyscale

Van der Weerd moderated the conversation, with speakers covering practical examples of climate adaptation and paths forward. The speakers emphasized equitable collaboration between brands and manufacturers to ensure timely, effective adaptation. Arvind's Abhishek Bansal gave examples in the cotton supply chain, working to strengthen relationships with cotton farmers and local universities to adapt species to withstand changes. Komar's Dr. Thiwanka De Fonseka said brands need more ingrained understanding of adaptation, urging them to partner more effectively with local suppliers.

Cascale's Joyce Tsoi offered some data from the Higg FEM, while highlighting Cascale's convening role to play. Strategies shared focused on protecting workers, safeguarding production, financing shared efforts, and building resilience from cotton fields through factories. Attendees were encouraged to elevate adaptation conversations to the C-suite and explore financial models to support this critical work.

Key Takeaways:

- Climate risks demand urgent, data-driven action
- Adaptation strategies needed across supply chain tiers
- Equitable brand-manufacturer collaboration essential



How Verified Supplier Data Can Create Decent Work and Better Purchasing Practices

This panel, hosted by Platinum Sponsor Retraced, spotlighted how standardized, verified supplier data — particularly from social assessments — can unlock deeper collaboration and better outcomes across supply chains. Retraced's Lukas Puender, Decor Global's Michael Cai, SLCP's Steve Harris, and ANTA Sports' Stanley Jia explored how digital platforms and shared frameworks reduce audit fatigue, support fairer purchasing practices, and strengthen corrective action planning.

Speakers:

- **Lukas Pünder – CEO & Co-founder, Retraced**
- Michael Cai – Director, Operations & Supply Chain, Decor Global
- Steve Harris – Chief Operating Officer, SLCP
- Stanley Jia – Associate Director, Corporate Sustainability of ANTA Sports Products Limited



Setting the stage for the industry's outlook on social and labor improvement, SLCP's Harris shared how SLCP and its Convergence Assessment Framework (CAF) came to be, while addressing the challenges of audit fatigue. He said SLCP ultimately measures its success by improving working conditions – and technology partnerships help to scale that mission through data access.

From the brand and supplier side, the panel offered perspectives on how social and labor data – such as through Retraced's integration with SLCP – gives way to bolder ambitions on compliance. They shared how verified insights can reduce duplicate auditing, improve lead times, enhance planning transparency, ensure fairer payment terms, and drive more effective follow-up on corrective action plans (CAPs). Specifically, Jia said the SLCP data elevates its code of conduct, allowing for deeper engagement with suppliers. As a manufacturer, Cai was able to reduce audits from 34 to 12 audits, demonstrating a trust in manufacturer leadership. The group agreed on the shared need for industry alignment in reducing audit duplication.

Key Takeaways:

- Verified data enables supplier trust and accountability
- Unified frameworks reduce audit fatigue
- Insights drive action on decent work and purchasing





Aligning Policy and Practice: Advancing Responsible Business Conduct & Fair Purchasing Practices

This session bridged global policy and practical business conduct, focusing on how due diligence legislation such as the CSDDD can drive fairer purchasing. Moderated by Tamar Hoek, PDS Limited's Buddhi Paranamana, and Good Business Lab's Renukaprasad B discussed the value of aligning tools like the Better Buying Purchasing Practices Index (BBPPI) with regulatory frameworks to support implementation.

As an intro, Hoek summarized recent policy updates, underscoring the growing focus on responsible business practices, despite challenges. The panel shared tangible steps brands can take to close gaps between commitments and action, while encouraging continued engagement through follow-up tools, reports, and policy collaboration.

Speakers:

- **Tamar Hoek – Senior Director Sustainable Fashion, Solidaridad**
- Buddhi Paranamana – Director Sustainability & Innovation, PDS Limited
- Renukaprasad B – Associate Director, Good Business Lab



Paranamana offered the manufacturer perspective, outlining a need for a proactive due diligence approach in the supply chain, while calling for greater inclusion for “supplier voice” in the policymaking process to unlock transformative change. He said Better Buying tools would be a valid mechanism for elevating the supplier voice. He also referenced the increasing reporting requirements as a clear business case for both suppliers and brands to stay relevant with investors, as well as consumers, to which Renukaprasad agreed.

Addressing the gaps, Renukaprasad said multi-stakeholders can be a valuable leader in ensuring legislation and impact-based metrics are linked to measurable outcomes on the ground at facilities. He offered a glimpse into how Good Business Lab works closely with brands to implement new strategies and address grievance mechanisms. “If you are not listening to the people who are closest to the problem, you are not going to get closer to the solution,” he said.

Key Takeaways:

- Due diligence laws push purchasing reform
- BBPPI-CSDDD alignment can close industry gaps
- Practical actions support legal and ethical compliance
-



What's Holding Back Supplier Voice and How Do We Fix It?

This session addressed the persistent gap between the tools available for supplier feedback and their actual use. With Worldly's Angela Lee as moderator, ERALDA's David Forsgate, Hirdaramani Apparel's Nikhil Hirdaramani, and STAR's Sovichea Saron explored why supplier voices are often left unheard — citing fear of retaliation, engagement fatigue, and lack of trust in outcomes.

Speakers:

- **Angela Lee – Director of Regional Supplier Engagement, Worldly**
- Nikhil Hirdaramani – Director, Hirdaramani Apparel
- David Forsgate – Chief Representative Officer, ERALDA Industries Ltd
- Sovichea Saron – Head of Secretariat, Sustainable Textiles of the Asian Region (STAR) Network



Hirdaramani underscored the importance of supplier involvement, acknowledging that while he believes the supplier voice is being heard more today – he sees a need for more scalable action. Saron highlighted the value of the network effect of convening Asian suppliers to show up effectively in policy conversations while boosting knowledge-sharing and clarity in aligned action. Forsgate shared his role as a sourcing agent at ERALDA, speaking to the collaborative nature he finds ingrained in Hong Kong's business culture. "Attention is sacred," he said, urging for maximum attention with suppliers despite the fast-paced nature of the industry.

The discussion emphasized the importance of safe, anonymous, and collective action – calling attention to tools like the Higg Index and Better Buying, as well as the role of federations and networks in amplifying supplier voices. Participants also co-developed strategies for strengthening supplier-led engagement mechanisms. These included prioritizing trusted feedback platforms, ensuring companies act on anonymized input, and leveraging Cascale's role to bridge gaps. The session concluded with a clear call for collective action: creating infrastructure where supplier voices can shape industry practices without fear, fatigue, or futility.

Key Takeaways:

- Fear, fatigue, and skepticism limit supplier participation
- Symbolic inclusion must give way to meaningful engagement
- Collective feedback channels can strengthen accountability



Cascale Annual Meeting 2025



Seven Years in Cascale: Looking Back, Moving Forward.

VF's Sean Cady joined interim CEO Harsh Saini for a candid conversation on Cascale's transformation during Cady's seven years of board leadership. Cady reflected on pivotal moments, including navigating COVID-19, steering Cascale through a purposeful rebrand, and leading the Worldly spin-off that established a stronger technology partnership and financial stability.

Speakers:

- **Harsh Saini – Interim CEO, Cascale**
- Sean Cady – Vice President, Global Sustainability, Responsibility, Trade and Government Affairs, VF Corporation

Cady described Cascale as a learning organization, agile enough to test, adapt, and evolve in response to members' needs and shifting global forces. He emphasized that what may appear "messy" from the outside reflects the courage to innovate and the necessity of evolving fast to progress. Both Cady and Saini underscored that Cascale's mission — advancing climate action and decent work — remains steadfast.

Looking ahead, Saini stressed Cascale's focus on refining tools like the Higg Index in partnership with Worldly, while strengthening its convening power to unite diverse voices. The session closed with gratitude to Cascale members, affiliates, and staff, along with a call to continue building momentum together for greater industry impact.

Key Takeaways:

- Cascale is a learning organization, evolving with purpose
- Cascale and Worldly's partnership reflects strategy and shared success
- The future lies in unity, innovation, and collective action
-



Closing the Loop: From Problem Statements to Progress for All.

This closing plenary brought together leaders from across the event to reflect on two days of solution-driven dialogue. Tamar Hoek, Quentin Thorel, Jeremy Lardeau, Delman Lee, and Shasta O'Loughlin each offered a critical takeaway that addressed the core problem statements introduced on Day 1. From enabling supplier voice to advancing fair purchasing through better data and policy alignment, the panel called for coordinated, long-term action. The session closed by reaffirming the movement's urgency—and collective momentum.

Speakers:

- **Jeremy Lardeau – Senior Vice President, Higg Index, Cascale**
- Tamar Hoek – Senior Policy Director Sustainable Fashion, Solidaridad
- Quentin Thorel – Group Head of Sustainability, CIEL Textile
- Dr. Delman Lee – Vice Chair, TAL Apparel Ltd
- Shasta O'Loughlin – Head of ESG, KMD Brands



KMD Brands' O'Loughlin addressed the question: "How can we make responsible purchasing practices the norm?" She said that "time" and "data" are key – for fostering mindset shifts and inviting CEO engagement at the ground level. Hoek expanded on that point, saying that "governance" is always important, especially tied to KPIs from the top down.

Thorel and Lee addressed the climate-related problem statement, paraphrased as "How can we move to more fairness and equity in the decarbonization journey?" Thorel emphasized that partnerships are key, and manufacturers continually need a seat at the collaboration table. He also said we must never neglect the business value. Lee added to that statement, agreeing on the business value especially in this geopolitical environment. He also highlighted the workshop-driven format that allowed attendees to confront the elephants in the room. Lardeau also touched on Cascale's strategy and key takeaways more broadly, with the panelists stressing the need for more co-creation in governance, more representation from sourcing leaders, and more partnerships forged within Cascale's existing membership.

Key Takeaways:

- Aligning policy and practice is essential for real progress
- Supplier voice must be scaled and sustained
- Systems thinking turns complexity into action





Partners in Progress: Accelerating Industry Impact

In this closing dialogue, Cascale's Harsh Saini and Worldly's Scott Raskin underscored how Cascale and Worldly are building a foundation for accelerated industry change. Together, the two leaders outlined the Shared Value Loop — a visual model that blends Cascale's tool credibility and governance with Worldly's platform technology and scalability. By aligning on goals and reinforcing each other's strengths, the partnership ensures that tools like the Higg Index are positioned to drive measurable progress on decarbonization and decent work across the consumer goods value chain.

Speakers:

- **Harsh Saini – Interim CEO, Cascale**
- **Scott Raskin – CEO, Worldly**

Saini outlined Cascale's contributions to the Shared Value Loop: including governance, legitimacy, credibility, and collective action. She emphasized that Cascale defines the "why" and "what," aligning tools like the Higg Index with regulation while convening the full value chain for impact. Building on this, Raskin highlighted Worldly's role in delivering the "how," ensuring standards are usable at scale. He described how Worldly's platform provides analytics, reporting, and innovation that translate data into actionable insights for companies worldwide.

In dialogue, both leaders underscored the importance of aligning the tools, methodology, and governance with evolving regulation, embedding equity at the core, and continuing to convene stakeholders. Together, Saini emphasized the trust and legitimacy inherent in the Higg Index tools and Cascale as a convener, while Raskin ensured that Worldly is best placed to scale and deliver measurable outcomes. The session closed with a message of unity: through shared purpose and complementary roles, Cascale and Worldly are accelerating progress toward climate goals and decent work across the consumer goods industry.

Key Takeaways:

- Shared Value Loop connects governance and innovation
- Partnership drives climate and decent work outcomes
- Alignment enables real-time, scalable impact



Closing Keynote by Hon. Sunny Tan

In the closing keynote, Hon. Sunny Tan emphasized Hong Kong's strategic role in shaping sustainable development globally. As both a legislative leader and industry voice, Tan called on public and private sectors to embrace sustainability as a shared responsibility. He highlighted the city's potential to act as a connector — linking innovation, policy, and manufacturing — and urged the industry to view sustainability not as an isolated ambition, but as a movement requiring joint commitment and action across borders and sectors.

Speakers:

- Hon. Sunny Tan – Chairman, Hong Kong Fashion Council & HKSAR Legislative Council Member (Textiles and Garment)



He spoke to Hong Kong's over 70 years as a reigning textile hub, and strategic sourcing networks. Serving international brands and retailers alike, Hong Kong has been proactively evolving into a fashion, textile, and garment hub with sustainability at the forefront. Tan gave examples of how Hong Kong-based manufacturers, such as Crystal International Group, are investing in recyclable materials, ethical production, and waste reduction efforts. The company's sustainability report showed improved efficiency and cost savings. As another example, he also referenced factory investments from Esquel Group for technologically advanced production.

Along with government funding, Tan stressed innovation is happening from all corners – including the major universities in Hong Kong, at non-governmental organizations like Redress, and research institutes like the Nano and Advanced Materials Institute (NAMI). He added that China is proactively designing a “dual carbon” strategy in textiles.

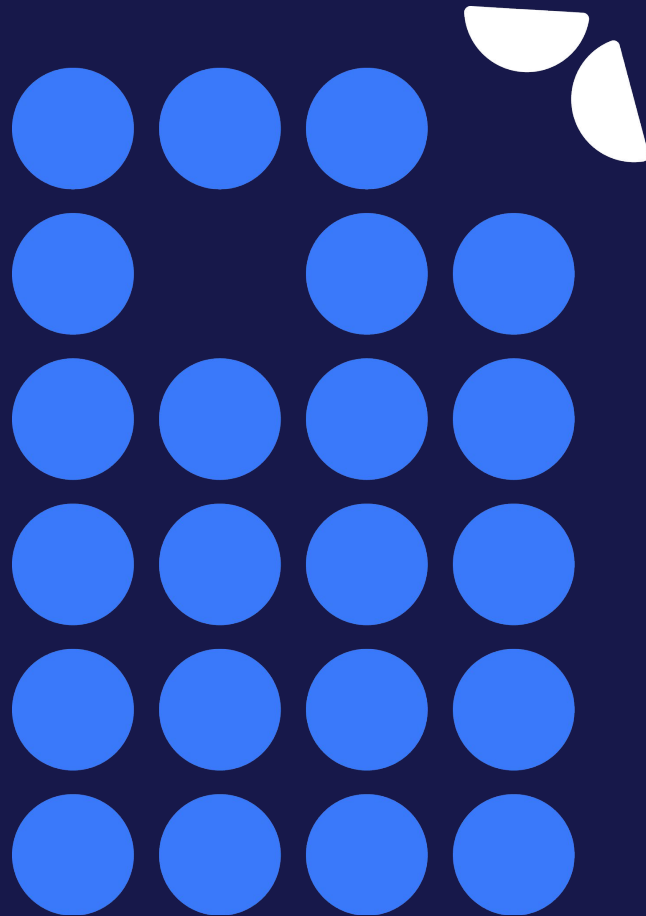
Key Takeaways:

- Hong Kong positioned as a unique, global sustainability hub in textiles and apparel
- Efforts by Hong Kong-based universities, research institutes, and companies leads to real ingenuity and sustainability progress
- Innovation and collaboration drive responsible growth – aided further by government support



Stage Summaries

Review key topics at the **Impact, Connections, Solutions,** and **Virtual** Stages as well as the key themes at the Invite-Only **Roundtables.**



Impact Stage

Key Impacts

Stronger
Verification
Critical

Share Costs
to Decarbonize

Scope 3
Requires FLAG
Emissions



Summary

The Impact Stage convened practical discussions on advancing data credibility, decarbonization, and integration of sustainability into core sourcing and supply chain strategies. Sessions opened with a deep dive into Higg FEM verification, spotlighting the balance between operational efficiency and systemic redesign to strengthen data integrity. Decarbonization emerged as a cross-cutting theme, from engaging suppliers beyond tier one to rethinking brand-manufacturer collaboration models.

Sourcing leaders shared candid insights on how carbon can be embedded into decision-making alongside cost and quality, underscoring the need for co-investment and shared accountability. The stage also highlighted technical advances, including improved interpretation of Higg FEM results and new methodologies for incorporating forest, land-use and agriculture (FLAG) emissions into Scope 3 reporting. Together, these sessions reinforced that progress requires credible data, systemic collaboration, and alignment of sourcing and sustainability priorities.



Higg Verification Evolution

This session reviewed Cascale's verification program and findings from an independent KPMG assessment, which identified pain points across governance, process, and data quality. Speakers emphasized balancing credibility and efficiency, extending verification windows, and improving data accuracy. Cascale is pursuing both operational improvements and longer-term redesign to ensure verification adds value for brands and manufacturers alike.

Speakers:

- **Maravillas Rodriguez Zarco – Senior Director, Higg Index Strategy & Operations, Cascale**
- Dhawal Mane – Director, Training and Verification, Cascale
- Karin Ekberg – CEO, Leadership & Sustainability

Key Takeaways:

- Verification must balance credibility, efficiency, and value—serving both brands and manufacturers.
- Data accuracy and extended verification windows are critical to improving quality and trust.
- Cascale is pursuing dual paths: smarter operations now, and deeper structural change over time.





Engaging Across Tiers for Supply Chain Decarbonization

The session tackled one of the apparel sector's most urgent challenges: how to drive emissions reductions beyond tier one suppliers, especially at tier two where most emissions occur. Chris from Cascal opened by grounding the discussion in data: of nearly 17,000 Higg FEM assessments submitted in 2023, just 10% of facilities accounted for roughly 80% of emissions, with tier two facilities representing about 65% of that total. This concentration highlights the outsized impact a relatively small group of actors can have if engaged effectively.

Speakers:

- **Chris Marshall – Director, Industry Decarbonization, Cascal**
- Brian La Plante – Senior Manager Sustainability, YKK
- Gabriel Li – Manager Vendor Sustainability, Environment, Amer Sports
- Dr. Julie Gretton – End-to-End Supply Chain Sustainability Lead, W.L. Gore & Associates
- Matthew Thurston – Divisional Vice President, Sustainability, REI

Key Takeaways:

- Decarbonization depends on collaboration across tiers
- Brands must co-invest with suppliers
- Streamlined data systems and collective action free resources for real impact, not duplicated reporting.



P2P Learning: How to Use, Interpret Higg FEM Results & Verification Outcomes

Speakers examined how brands and facilities interpret Higg FEM self-assessments and verifications, stressing the risks of relying on a single score. The session focused on practical ways to apply verified outcomes to strengthen supply chain management and facility performance.

Speakers:

- **Demith Gooneratne – Director, Higg Facility Tools, Cascale**
- **Arrow Shi – Global Scheme Manager, TÜV Rheinland Co., Ltd.**
- **Kyle Chung – AGM – Sustainability, Crystal International Group Ltd.**

Key Takeaways:

- A single FEM score is insufficient for evaluation
- Verification should guide supply chain strategies
- Consistency in use improves alignment and impact



and Sustainability: Decarbonization Amid Supply Chain

Kim Drenner
Head of Environmental Impact, Patagonia

Liam Salter
CEO, RESET Carbon

Jimmy Summers
VP, EHS, Chief Sustainability Officer, Elevate Textiles, Inc.



Aligning Sourcing, Sustainability: Collaborative Decarbonization in the Apparel Supply Chain

This session examined how sourcing executives balance competing demands of cost, quality, lead time, resilience, and sustainability – within a landscape of sourcing constraints. Through a participatory workshop and panel discussion, speakers explored how carbon can be integrated into core sourcing decisions, the limits of current collaboration models, and new tools to bridge brand-manufacturer gaps in the decarbonization journey.

Speakers:

- **Matthew Guenther – VP, Corporate Sustainability, TAL Apparel**
- Bart DeMeirsman – Advisor, Different Dialogue
- Dr. Delman Lee – Vice Chair, TAL Apparel
- Jimmy Summers –VP – EHS, Chief Sustainability Officer, Elevate Textiles, Inc.
- Kim Drenner – Head of Environmental Impact, Patagonia
- Paul Lennen – Managing Director, Weave Services Limited
- Liam Salter – CEO, RESET Carbon
- Agnes Fung – Senior Consultant, Weave Services Limited

Key Takeaways:

- Integrate carbon alongside cost, quality
- Current brand-manufacturer collaboration models face clear limitations
- New tools and approaches can break siloes



Enhanced Scope 3 Tracking: Navigating FLAG Emissions Using the Higg Index

This session addressed the growing importance of understanding forest, land-use and agriculture (FLAG) emissions within Scope 3 greenhouse gas reporting. Speakers presented a methodology for establishing baseline FLAG emissions using Higg Index data, and participants engaged in a workshop to identify integration needs for improving Scope 3 calculations. For fuller nuance, the report is available [here](#).

Speakers:

- Joël Mertens – Director, Higg Product Tools, Cascalé
- Paula Bernstein – Associate Director, Sustainability Science, Worldly

Key Takeaways:

- FLAG emissions are a critical but often overlooked part of Scope 3 reporting
- The Higg Index can support baseline FLAG emission calculations
- Industry collaboration is needed to integrate FLAG data into Scope 3 strategies



Connections Stage

Key Connections

**Responsible
Purchasing**
as Imperative

**Finance, Tools,
& Data**
as Enablers

Collaboration
Across Tiers

Ambition
With Action



Summary

Across two days, the Connections Stage focused on advancing responsible practices and accelerating decarbonization in global supply chains.

Day 1 emphasized making responsible purchasing practices standard, not optional, and highlighted governance as a regulated necessity rather than a voluntary choice. Financing models showed how capital enables manufacturers to adopt sustainable technologies, while sessions on the Higg Index and verification reinforced the role of shared tools and credible data in reducing duplication.

Day 2 broadened to regional and global perspectives, with Hong Kong's leadership in responsible sourcing, the role of verified data in transforming operations, and alignment on Scope 3 emissions through Cascale's MCAP program. Later sessions explored bridging brand goals with factory realities, regional decarbonization opportunities, and scaling convergence through technology partnerships.





Scene: How Can Responsible Purchasing Practices Be an *Expectation* Rather Than Exception?

The panel emphasized that responsible purchasing practices (RPP) must shift from being optional to standard. Speakers highlighted the risks of brand-driven cost pressures that leave suppliers absorbing financial and operational burdens. Manufacturers called for long-term partnerships and fairer financial terms to enable investment in worker well-being and decarbonization.

Speakers:

- **Joleen Ong – Senior Director, Brand & Retailer Membership, Cascalé**
- Annabel Meurs – Executive Director, Fair Wear
- Marissa Maren – Commissioner & Director, Busana Apparel Group
- Phuong Do – Social Compliance Accreditation Director, Fair Labor Association
- Shasta O’Loughlin – Head of ESG, KMD Brands

Key Takeaways:

- RPP requires shifting from transactional to long-term, partnership-based models.
- Harmonized standards reduce duplication, increase accountability.
- Embedding RPP is a business imperative – driving resilience

Developing Cascale's Governance Process to Drive Collective Action

Moderator Ilishio Lovejoy (Laudes Foundation) called the EU's CSDDD a game-changer, shifting HRDD from compliance to impact. Panelists stressed embedding HRDD in business strategy (Evre Kaynak, W. L. Gore), ensuring consistent interpretation through tools like the Higg Index (Nikki Wood, Cascale), extending responsibility to farms and reducing audit duplication (Lena Staafgard, Better Cotton), and viewing regulation as a driver of resilience (Pascal Brun, Zalando). The takeaway: meaningful HRDD requires harmonized approaches, transparent practices, and collective accountability to deliver real change for people and business alike.

Speakers:

- **Ilishio Lovejoy – Programme Manager Labour Rights & Independent Researcher, Laudes Foundation**
- Evre Kaynak – Global Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) Leader, W. L. Gore & Associates
- Nikki Wood – Director, Governance, Cascale
- Lena Staafgard – Chief Operating Officer, Better Cotton
- Pascal Brun – VP of Sustainability, D&I, ZALANDO SE

Key Takeaways:

- HRDD is shifting from voluntary good practice to a regulated business imperative.
- Collaboration and shared tools reduce duplication and enable impact where it matters.
- Embedding HRDD into strategy builds resilience for business and livelihoods for workers.



Pratibha Syntex – Fibre to Fashion

Operations from organic and regenerative cotton to sustainable manufacturing practices, circularity and decarbonization



Financing the Future: Decarbonization in Action with Good Fashion Fund & Pratibha Syntex

This case study showed how financing unlocks sustainable transformation. The Good Fashion Fund provides long-term debt financing for manufacturers to adopt clean technologies, while Pratibha Syntex shared how the partnership enabled investments that reduced emissions and resource use. Speakers stressed that the technology exists—finance and shared responsibility are the missing links to scale solutions.

Speakers:

- **Jayanth Kashyap B. – Investment Lead, Good Fashion Fund**
- **Shreyaskar Chaudhary – Managing Director, Pratibha Syntex Ltd.**

Key Takeaways:

- Finance bridges the gap to implement proven technologies.
- Supplier-financier partnerships deliver impact and competitiveness.
- Shared risk across brands, suppliers, and investors is essential.

From Proprietary to Practical: Aligning Around the Higg Index Tools

The session highlighted the inefficiencies of proprietary reporting systems and the benefits of shared tools like the Higg Index. Brands like M&S use the Higg Index to streamline reporting, while manufacturers like Stretchline value its ability to create one verified dataset for multiple buyers. Standardization builds trust, reduces duplication, and frees resources for action.

Speakers:

- Henry Huang – Senior Sustainability Manager, Marks & Spencer
- Nilanthi Wijegunawardena – Quality & Group Compliance Lead, Stretchline Holdings Limited

Key Takeaways:

- Higg Index cuts duplication and improves comparability.
- Standardization builds credibility between brands and suppliers.
- Moving from proprietary to shared systems accelerates progress.



Mane

ation, Training & Insights

Dept. General Manager



Peer-to-Peer Learning with HQTS

HQTS shared its approach to verification, emphasizing continuous training, ethics, and risk management. With decades of experience, HQTS underscored that credibility relies on impartiality, consistent training, and strong health and safety practices for verifiers.

Speakers:

- **Dhawal Mane – Director, Training and Verification, Cascale, moderator**
- Tracy Jiao – Factory Audit Dept. General Manager, HQTS

Key Takeaways:

- Ethics and impartiality are essential to credible verification.
- Training must be ongoing and tied to real-world cases.
- Safety protocols protect verifiers in the field.

Investing in Sustainable Growth: How Hong Kong is Shaping the Future of Responsible Sourcing

Cathy Ching, Invest Hong Kong, highlighted Hong Kong's role as a hub for responsible sourcing and green innovation. She pointed to government funds supporting transformation, the city's leadership in sustainable finance, and its unique position connecting Mainland China and global markets.

Speakers:

- Cathy Ching – SVP (Sustainability), Invest Hong Kong

Key Takeaways:

- Hong Kong combines policy support, funding, and global connectivity to drive sustainable growth.
- Government funding schemes like the BUD Fund and Green Tech Fund are driving sustainable transformation.
- Adoption of international sustainability reporting standards strengthens global alignment.





What Story Does Your Data Narrate?

Glen Si, Benchmarks Company Ltd, argued that verified data is not just compliance but a catalyst for change. He showed how Higg FEM and SLCP data improve efficiency, cut resource use, and reduce audit fatigue. Case studies, such as water savings in dyeing factories, underscored real-world impact.

Speakers:

- Glen Si – CEO, Benchmarks Company Ltd

Key Takeaways:

- Data is a starting point for transformation, not just compliance.
- Accurate, verified data unlocks hidden opportunities, improves efficiency, and drives sustainability.
- Case studies, such as reducing water use in textile factories, show measurable impact.

Understanding the Journey: Sharing on Scope 3 Emissions Challenges

Cascale's Chu Ching opened with live polls showing data collection, especially from Tier 2, as the biggest Scope 3 challenge, while SBTi commitments are the main driver for action. MAS Holdings' Jayapala shared the company's path from Scope 1 and 2 to publishing SBTis, noting Scope 3's outsized footprint and the need for better data systems. Wang highlighted pressures for Tier 2 suppliers, including costs, inconsistent audits, and limited collaboration. CIEL's Bucktowar described progress on renewables, coal phase out, and sustainable materials, while stressing supply chain complexity and leadership buy-in.

Speakers:

- Chu Ching – Decarbonization Program Cdr., Cascale,
- Dhanujie Jayapala – Head of Environ. Sustainability, MAS Holdings Pvt Ltd
- Laura Wang – Marketing Senior Mgr., Tiong Liong Industrial co., LTD.
- Nilesch Bucktowar – Head of Sustainability, Ciel Textile Region, Ciel Textile

Key Takeaways:

- Supplier data is the biggest hurdle in Scope 3 tracking.
- SBTi commitments are the main driver pushing manufacturers to measure and report Scope 3.
- Data quality & consistency remain challenges



Nicole Lee-Kauer
Manufacturer Climate Action
Program (MCAP) Coordinator
Cascale

Vice
Tai Loc
Liz Lipton-McCombie
Head of ESG & Sustainability
Nordstrom



Manufacturers and Brands Joining Forces Through Target Setting

Nicole Lee-Kauer, Cascale, led a discussion with Joyce Tsoi (Cascale), Liz Lipton-McCombie (Nordstrom), and Jennifer Yang (Tai Loc). They presented the Manufacturer Climate Action Program (MCAP) as a structured path for brands and suppliers to set science-based targets together. Nordstrom shared how MCAP deepened supplier engagement, while Tai Loc highlighted the value of tools and education.

Speakers:

- **Nicole Lee-Kauer – MCAP Coordinator, Cascale**
- Liz Lipton-McCombie – Head of ESG & Sustainability, Nordstrom
- Jennifer Yang – VP, Tai Loc Producing Shoes Co., Ltd
- Dr. Joyce Tsoi – Senior Director, Decarbonization Program, Cascale

Key Takeaways:

- MCAP accelerates climate action by providing a structured, 18-month process for science-aligned target setting.
- Brands benefit by deepening engagement with strategic suppliers and gaining visibility into their readiness and capabilities.
- Manufacturers gain tools, training, and peer support to measure emissions, set targets, and build decarbonization roadmaps.

Addressing Misalignment in Sustainability: Bridging Brand Goals and Factory Realities

In this session, Gabriel Amouyal, Audit Services Director at QIMA, tackles the critical misalignments between brand sustainability ambitions and the practical realities at the factory level. Drawing from QIMA's latest study, he will address trends and development in environmental regulations, why brands and suppliers are not aligning, and how you can rise above and achieve your sustainability goals.

Speakers:

- Gabriel Amouyal – Audit Services Director, QIMA

Key Takeaways:

- Brands' sustainability ambitions often clash with operational realities at factories.
- Clearer alignment on expectations and regulations can reduce inefficiencies and duplication.
- Collaboration between brands and suppliers is essential to achieving shared sustainability goals.





Decarbonization Opportunities in Pakistan

The panel, using learnings from recent workshops in Pakistan, emphasized that responsible purchasing practices (RPP) must shift from being optional to standard. Speakers highlighted the risks of brand-driven cost pressures that leave suppliers absorbing financial and operational burdens. Manufacturers called for long-term partnerships and fairer financial terms to enable investment in worker well-being and decarbonization.

Speakers:

- **Alexandra Rieger – Senior Director, Manufacturer Membership, Cascade**
- Muhammad Fauz ul Azeem – General Mngr., Corporate Sustainability & Chemical Management, Interloop
- Saqib Shahzad – Head of Sustainability, Sapphire, Diamond Fabrics Limited

Keyaways:

- Pakistan's textile sector is actively pursuing energy efficiency and renewable solutions.
- Decarbonization requires collective action across manufacturers, brands, and policymakers.
- Industry collaboration in Pakistan offers scalable models for global climate action.

Unlocking Industry Convergence at Scale with Target, Inspectorio & Cascale

Moderator Kelci Degnian led a discussion on how the industry could move beyond proprietary tools to streamline supplier engagement and risk management. Speakers highlighted how they advanced a tech-enabled sourcing journey that built transparency, improved performance, and reduced reporting burden for suppliers. Inspectorio's León de la Barra outlined how digital platforms enabled greater efficiency and accuracy in supplier data. Target's Trinh shared how innovation and collaboration drove measurable impact at scale. Together, the discussion showed how digital convergence could create scalable solutions that benefited both brands and suppliers.

Speakers:

- **Kelci Degnian – Senior Manager, Brand & Retail Membership, Cascale**
- Antonio León de la Barra – VP of Strategy, Growth, and Innovation, Inspectorio
- Ninh Trinh, Director – Responsible Sourcing and Sustainable Capabilities, Target

Key Takeaways:

- Digital platforms enable standardized data and reduce supplier reporting burdens.
- Tech-driven convergence builds transparency and efficiency across supply chains.
- Collaborative innovation strengthens responsible sourcing



Solutions Stage

Key Solutions

Metrics

Offer Clarity

Convergence

Creates Trust

Shared Tools

Drive Impact



Summary

The Solutions Stage explored how data, convergence, and policy alignment can accelerate sustainability progress.

Day 1 introduced new benchmarking tools from Cascale and Aii to define emissions performance and assess energy source risks, giving manufacturers clearer targets and brands actionable insights. Later, leaders called for audit convergence to ease supplier burdens, noting progress with SLCP integration but stressing the need for trust, regulatory clarity, and wider brand adoption.

Day 2 turned to the policy and standards agenda, with APAC discussions highlighting renewable energy opportunities and alignment with Cascale's pillars of climate action and decent work. Sessions on the Higg FEM roadmap and Foundational Environmental Performance (FEP) underscored the importance of verification, consistency, and shared definitions to strengthen credibility and enable scalable change.



Industry Benchmarking to Drive Decarbonization

This session introduced two new methodologies to help the apparel sector align data and accelerate decarbonization. Lisa Frost presented Aii's Carbon Benchmark Methodology, which sets process-level benchmarks across more than 500 production processes, giving facilities clear performance baselines and identifying where efficiency and renewable energy improvements are most urgent. Joël Mertens outlined Cascale's Effective Energy Carbon Intensity (EECI) metric in Higg FEM, which accounts for both thermal and electrical energy sources, enabling a clearer view of fossil fuel reliance and renewable energy adoption.

Speakers:

- Joël Mertens – Director, Higg Product Tools, Cascale
- Lisa Frost – Climate Programs Director, Apparel Impact Institute

Key Takeaways:

- Benchmarks define clear targets for facility energy and emissions performance.
- The EECI metric sharpens visibility into fossil fuel dependence and renewable integration.
- Combined, these tools support data-driven decarbonization and investment decisions.



Stage

2025



Audit Convergence in Action: What Will It Take to Transform?

The panel addressed audit fatigue, with manufacturers burdened by overlapping audits from brands, regulators, and certifications. SLCP's Mason described global growth to 17,000+ facilities in 122 countries and partnerships with Cascale's FSLM and Better Work to cut duplication. Yet trust gaps, shifting regulations, and brand requirements slow adoption. Birla Cellulose warned audits are financially unsustainable, while Target stressed the shift from proprietary systems to shared tools. Verifiers emphasized integrity and transparency as essential to building trust.

Speakers:

- **Lisa Domoney – Senior Director, Strategic Growth, Cascale**
- Fairouz Shahana – Chief Strategy Officer, GSCS International Ltd.
- Jason Mandels – Brand Learning & Accountability, Fair Wear
- Ninh Trinh – Director Responsible Sourcing & Sustainable Capabilities, Target
- Surya Valluri – Chief Sustainability Officer, Birla Cellulose & Grasim Industries Ltd., Birla Cellulose
- Tom Mason – Senior Policy & Stakeholder Eng. Manager, SLCP

Key Takeaways:

- Audit fatigue drains resources
- Building trust in shared data is essential to scaling convergence
- Progress is real but slow; collaboration and regulatory support are needed to finish the job.

APAC Policy Priorities

This session examined the evolving policy and legislative landscape in Asia Pacific, with a focus on energy transitions and Cascale's strategic pillars of combating climate change and ensuring decent work for all. Members of the newly formed APAC Member Expert Team (MET) joined industry experts to identify opportunities, gaps, and pathways for collaboration.

Speakers:

- **Howard Kwong – Sr. Manager, Public Affairs, APAC, Cascale**
- Eric Jen – Founder & CEO, Ren Energy
- Mayko Tatsuyama Mathisen – Group ESG Director, Trimco Group

Key Takeaways:

- Policy alignment is essential to accelerate renewable energy adoption
- Regional collaboration strengthens industry influence on APAC legislation
- Supporting energy transitions is critical to both climate and labor priorities





Higg FEM: Roadmap and Vision for the Future to Enhance the Industry Leading Environmental Assessment Tool.

This session reviewed the latest developments of the Higg Facility Environmental Module (FEM) and outlined the roadmap for strengthening its role as the industry's leading environmental assessment tool. Participants discussed upcoming verification updates and provided feedback on how well the roadmap aligns with industry needs and expectations.

Speakers:

- **Demith Gooneratne – Director, Higg Facility Tools, Cascale**
- Daniel Etra – Vice President, Product, Worldly
- Jeremy Lardeau – Senior Vice President, Higg Index, Cascale
- Dr. Julie Gretton – End-To-End Supply Chain Sustainability, W.L. Gore & Associates

Key Takeaways:

- The Higg FEM roadmap reflects industry priorities and evolving expectations
- Verification updates are central to building confidence and credibility
- Stakeholder engagement ensures the tool remains relevant and impactful



Developing an Industry Aligned Definition of Foundational Environmental Performance (FEP)

This session shared outcomes from Cascale's multi-phase consultation process to establish an industry-aligned definition of Foundational Environmental Performance (FEP). Speakers presented five core principles for creating a unified baseline to reduce audit fatigue, promote consistency, and strengthen industry-wide sustainability efforts. Next steps focused on collaboration to refine and implement the framework for credible and scalable action..

Speakers:

- **Prasanth Nandakumar – Manager, Stakeholder Engagement, APAC, Cascale**
- Frank Michel – Chief Executive Officer, ZDHC Foundation
- Demith Gooneratne – Director, Higg Facility Tools, Cascale

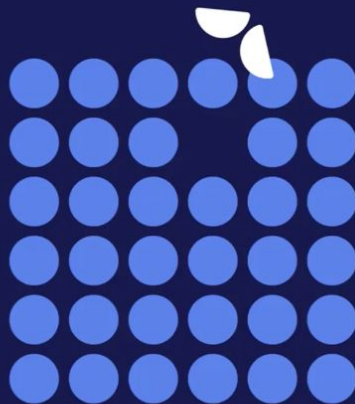
Key Takeaways:

- A unified FEP definition reduces audit fatigue and promotes consistency
- Broad stakeholder consultation ensures credibility and alignment
- Industry-wide adoption will enable scalable environmental progress



Virtual Stage

**Cascale
Annual
Meeting
Hong Kong
& Online
2025**



Takeaways

- Build avoided cost into financial analysis
- Manufacturers need emissions reduction plans
- Avoid risk through resilient sustainability strategies

Highlights

Over **150** attendees attended this Annual Meeting 2025 virtually, showcasing the value in a globally intertwined community. Sessions spanned the business case for sustainability and more.

In one virtual-only session “The ROI of Sustainability: Turning Green into Green,” speakers showcased real-time case studies of how investing in sustainability delivers measurable returns both financially and strategically.

Speakers:

- Rick Horwitch – Chief of Sustainability & Supply Chain Strategy, Bureau Veritas
- Ana Rodes – Head of Sustainability, Recover
- Rakesh Vazirani – Director, Global Environmental Services – Decarbonization & Circularity, Bureau Veritas
- Pranjal Jyoti Goswami – Chief Sustainability Officer, Gokaldas Exports Limited
- Tensie Whelan – Founding Director, NYU Stern Center for Sustainable Business,

Invite-Only Roundtables

Key Insights

Consistent
Standards

Aligned
Expectations

Policy
Engagement

Financial
Strategies



Roundtable Summary

Across **two days** (and **10 roundtables**), participants emphasized that industry transformation depends on collective action, consistent standards, and pragmatic pathways for implementation. Manufacturers highlighted the need for clarity and unity in shaping EU textile policy, while retailers stressed the influence of consumer expectations and their role in cascading decarbonization goals through supply chains.

The Better Cotton and Li & Fung and LFX-convened discussions underscored the importance of embedding sustainability at the material and sourcing levels, while sessions on CSRD reporting and data frequency called for practical frameworks to align with growing disclosure demands. The Laudes Foundation dialogue closed by reaffirming the sector's responsibility to prioritize producer support and create the conditions for long-term impact. Together, these conversations reflected a common recognition that ambitious policies and targets must be matched with actionable strategies, transparent reporting, and shared responsibility across the value chain.

Invite-Only **Roundtables**



Worldly & Cascale Dinner Reception

A bridge between the Cascale Annual Meeting and the Worldly Customer Forum, the jointly-hosted dinner on September 17 highlighted the great partnership between Cascale and Worldly, and gave attendees a chance to chat over exceptional local cuisine at the Palace Garden Museum.



Thank You to Our Sponsors

Because of your exceptional support and enduring dedication to the sustainability cause, we made this Annual Meeting 2025 unforgettable.

Without your commitment, we would not have accomplished such an incredible lift.

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Next Year: **Greece**

The **Cascale Annual Meeting 2026** in Greece will be our next premier platform to engage with leaders across the consumer goods industry.

If you enjoyed this year, then maximize your impact with our high-visibility sponsorship packages, exhibitor booths, and networking opportunities. Whether you aim to position yourself as a thought leader, contribute to dynamic conversations as a speaker, generate high-quality leads, or showcase innovative solutions, our sponsorship opportunities will help you achieve your objectives.

Please join us, and stay tuned for more information at Cascale.org.



Thank you!

We greatly value your feedback and would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to complete [this brief survey](#).

Your input will help us enhance future events and better meet your needs. Please contact events@cascale.org if you have any questions or want to provide more feedback.

We hope to see you next year for the Annual Meeting 2026 in Greece.



**Cascale
Annual
Meeting
Hong
Kong
2025**