

PRESS RELEASE

Higg Co connects with the Open Apparel Registry's API: adopts OAR ID to improve apparel sector facility data

Today, the Open Apparel Registry (OAR) announces the integration via API of facility name and address data from the Higg sustainability software platform, establishing an unprecedented collaboration to streamline facility data records for the apparel industry. The integration allows a facility to link its Higg Index account to its OAR profile using an OAR ID. Supply chain partners can then use a facility's OAR ID to find its Higg Index assessments on the Higg platform.

The API integration and cross-referencing of data between the Higg and OAR platforms saves facilities, brands, retailers, and civil society time; collates disparate facility lists into one central, uniform repository; and mitigates the risk of inaccurate data sharing.

By adopting the unique OAR IDs used by thousands across the apparel sector, Higg Co is signalling its support for the OAR as a key source of credible facility data in the apparel sector. Connecting with the OAR via API enables Higg Co to maintain facility profile data in real time, ensuring that the data shared between the organisations is current and up to date.

This new API data integration effort represents a significant step towards greater collaboration, transparency and accountability across the global supply chain. It also presents the data in a structured, open format, enabling users to make practical use of the data for the benefit of all.

“As a neutral, open source tool used by the entire apparel industry, the OAR exists to tackle the long-standing problem of facility identification,” says Natalie Grillon, Executive Director of the Open Apparel Registry. “By integrating data with the OAR via API, Higg Co is not only enhancing the necessary processing of data for its customers, but also sending a strong message to industry about the importance of collaboration and the value of a single, central ID to act as a common identifier across databases and systems. In turn, through having a better understanding of shared connections at the facility level, the opportunities for organisations to collaborate on meaningful change are truly enormous.”

“Key to the growth of the OAR is the decision to build the tool as an open data and open source platform”, says Justin Walgran, Lead Developer at Azavea, the geo-spatial software B-Corporation that powers the OAR. “It’s an instrumental part of helping an industry that has previously held data under lock and key to open up supply chains for the benefit of all. Through integrating with the OAR via API, Higg is signalling its support for more open data sharing across the apparel sector. We hope that other influential bodies in the apparel sector will follow Higg’s lead in connecting with the API to synchronize key data points.”



Each facility contributed to the OAR is processed by a sophisticated name and address matching algorithm, which recognises where facilities have already been contributed to the database. This process eradicates data duplications and provides users with an understanding of the multiple affiliations of each facility. Every facility in the OAR is allocated its own unique OAR ID similar to a person's social security or national identity number. An industry-standard method of identification, the OAR ID eases the management of facility data, creating efficiency for users across the entire apparel sector.

More than 18,000 global facilities, including those that work with the Sustainable Apparel Coalition's global members, already use the Higg platform. Higg facilities new to the OAR can choose to be included in the registry, contributing to the open-source, industrywide effort for shared identification of manufacturing facilities.

"The management of supply chain data records has traditionally been complicated and unreliable," says John Armstrong, Higg Co Chief Technology Officer. "By sharing data via API across the Higg and Open Apparel Registry platforms, we are setting a new standard that helps the apparel industry better manage and maintain this data, advancing the goal of transparency and accountability of data throughout the global supply chain."

Voicing her support for the integration, Agata Smeets, Director, Global Sustainability at Gap, said, "We are pleased to see the integration of the OAR facility IDs with Higg Index data. This integration will bring much needed transparency into the apparel supply chain and make it much easier to map our facilities go forward. We look forward to seeing OAR integrated into more platforms in the future."

Today's announcement sets a precedent for open data platforms to better meet the transparency demands consumers and policymakers are making of the apparel industry. In addition to helping facilities efficiently manage their data, the new API integration also helps brands more easily maintain supply chain records and comply with efforts like Fashion Revolution's Fashion Transparency Index and the Transparency Pledge, which require that brands submit facility lists annually, and the Good on You app, which awards credit in its labour rights section for supply chain disclosure via the OAR.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Responding to the news, Delman Lee, President and Chief Technology Officer at Tal Apparel Limited, a member of the Sustainable Apparel Coalition, said, “I am glad to see that the Higg platform is integrating with the Open Apparel Registry. Positive news that everyone is working on different pieces of the sustainability puzzle and collaborating on solving the big challenges.”

Commenting on the integration, Linda Greer, Senior Global Fellow at the Institute for Public and Environmental Affairs (IPE), said, “The challenge of facility identification has plagued the apparel sector for years. By integrating its data with the OAR via API, Higg Co has taken a significant step in eradicating the confusion over facility data for its members and others by making use of the OAR ID as the industry standard for facility identification. I applaud this integration and encourage the numerous multi stakeholder organisations, certifications schemes and brands in this sector to follow Higg’s lead.”

<EXPLAINER>

API stands for “application programming interface”. This is a mechanism in software technology that refers to how multiple applications can interact with and obtain data from one another. Higg Co is the first organisation that has chosen to connect with the OAR’s push pull API, enabling it to both programmatically pull data from the system, but also to contribute (or push) data to the OAR in an automated manner. Connecting to the OAR via API enables organisations to ensure that their data on the OAR is current and up to date, without the need to manually update their list.

About the Open Apparel Registry (OAR)

<https://openapparel.org/>

<https://info.openapparel.org/>

The Open Apparel Registry (OAR) is a free, neutral, open source tool mapping garment facilities worldwide and assigning a unique ID to each. It is a go-to source for identifying apparel facilities and their affiliations, organizing supplier lists from industry stakeholders into one central open source map and database. Each record includes the facility name, address and OAR ID, and displays a list of which organizations have contributed this data and are connected to the facility.

Data is contributed to the OAR by stakeholders across the apparel sector, including multi stakeholder initiatives, brands and retailers, facilities and factory groups, service providers, and civil society organizations.

The collated database of facility names, addresses and affiliated parties is powered by an advanced name and address-matching algorithm and is available for use by any organization, for free, to:

- Update and standardize facility names and addresses against the database

- Understand affiliations of current and prospect facilities to identify opportunities for collaboration
- Find potential new suppliers, listed with their credentials and affiliations
- Leverage the OAR ID as a unique and shared ID across software systems and databases

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About Azavea

<https://www.azavea.com/>

Azavea builds custom geospatial software for mission-driven organizations. A certified B Corporation, Azavea also has extensive experience in developing and maintaining open source projects.

About Higg Co

www.higg.com

Higg Co is a technology company formed in 2019 to deliver and support unified sustainability measurement tools for consumer goods industries, beginning with the apparel, footwear and textile sector. Higg Co offers a comprehensive supply chain measurement and improvement system and supports implementation of the Higg Index, with sustainability software that provides powerful insight into supply chain sustainability impact. The Higg Index is a suite of tools that enables brands, retailers and facilities of all sizes — at every stage in their sustainability journey — to accurately measure and score a company or product’s sustainability performance. Higg Co offers the only end-to-end value chain sustainability performance framework available, enabling businesses to make meaningful improvements that protect the environment, people and communities. Higg Co is a Public Benefit LLC.